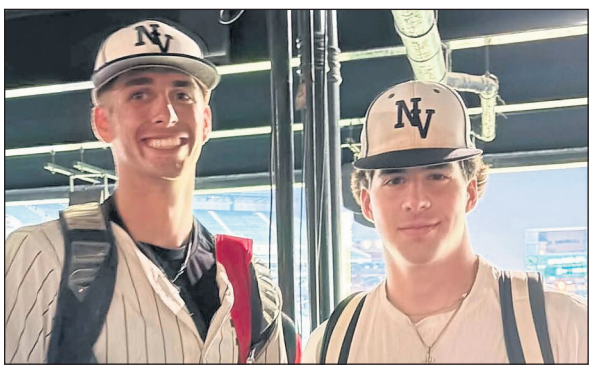

Niles baseball duo participates in all-star game

Page B1

Stay Safe

Be mindful of your surroundings, especially in unfamiliar or dimly lit areas. Trust your instincts - if something feels off, move to a safer location if possible. Encourage neighbors to establish a neighborhood watch program to keep our communities safe.

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Today's The Herald-Palladium included inside

Niles Star

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LMC adds hard cider to wine, viticulture program

SUBMITTED

BENTON HARBOR — Hard cider production is an emerging industry in Michigan, with the state now standing as the second-largest producer of the craft beverage in the country.

According to the 2025 Economic Impact Study of the Michigan Craft Beverage Industry, more than 135 Michigan beverage makers craft hard cider, producing over 1.2 million gallons annually. Wineries and cideries in Southwest Michigan are instrumental in this growth, making the region one of the top in the state for production of the centuries-old beverage.

Lake Michigan College's Wine and Viticulture Technology program is preparing students for this opportunity by adding hard cider production to the curriculum. As a result, Lake Michigan Vintners, the working enterprise and commercial arm of the College's Wine and Viticulture Technology program, has announced the release of Grand Lac Cider.

Named for Lake Michigan, Grand Lac honors the waters that have shaped Southwest Michigan agriculture for generations. The student-crafted cider celebrates the region's orchard heritage while showcasing the hands-on learning experiences that define the program.

"We challenge students to move beyond theory and make real production decisions. This project required students to think like beverage makers rather than simply following instructions," said Tim Godfrey, Director of Wine and Viticulture Technology at Lake Michigan College. "It mirrors the creative and analytical process used throughout the beverage industry while reminding students that there is rarely one correct path to creating something great."

For this release, the cider base began with fresh-pressed juice sourced through Michigan State University's Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center in Benton Harbor. The juice was created from a blend of experimental apple breeding selections grown in one of the center's research blocks, including numerous unnamed varieties.

"Partnerships like this connect agricultural research with education and industry. Seeing students work with apples from our experimental plantings creates a

See **CIDER**, page A8

Photo provided

Lake Michigan College's Wine and Viticulture Technology program has added hard cider production to the curriculum.

'No justice, no peace'

Photos by Don Campbell / PMG staff

Morse Daniels and James Clay, parents of Timothy Johnson, talk about their son during a news conference Thursday at Benton Harbor City Hall. Johnson, 24, was killed in an alleged hit and run in Silver Creek Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

Family of Benton Harbor man speak out, await autopsy results

By LOUISE WREGE
Paxton Media Group

BENTON HARBOR — About 30 people gathered Thursday on the steps of Benton Harbor City Hall, saying there will be no peace until the truth is told about how 24-year-old Timothy Johnson died last month.

"I'm just going to keep saying, 'Justice for Tim,' ... because my brother was murdered, and it was racially motivated," alleged Isheria Jackson, Johnson's sister, during the rally and news conference.

Johnson, of Benton Harbor, was found dead on May 24 from what appeared to be a fatal hit and run on M-152 and Pleasant Street in Silver Creek Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

Cass County Sheriff Clint Roach said during a news conference last week that based on car parts found at the scene, they are looking for a 2010-12 Ford Taurus that is possibly black in color. He said an autopsy is being done by the Western Michigan University Medical Examiner's Office to determine the cause of death. Roach said the report is not expected to be available for 30-90 days.

He said the medical examiner's office told his office they have not released information to anyone concerning the death, including Johnson's family. When contacted Thursday after the rally, Roach said he had nothing further to add at this time.

"We're just waiting on the autopsy and to wrap up our investigation," Roach said.

During Thursday's rally and call to action, Johnson's father, James Clay of Benton Harbor, said the medical examiner's office had called him, asking if his son had any scars or broken bones.

"I said he had one (scar) on his forehead and one (near) his eye from when he was a little boy," Clay told the crowd.

He said his son never had any broken bones.

Morse Daniels, mother of Timothy Johnson, and his sister, Isheria Jackson, take a moment during a news conference Thursday at Benton Harbor City Hall to talk about Johnson, who was killed in an alleged hit and run in Silver Creek Township. A police investigation showed Johnson, 24, of Benton Harbor, was walking on M-152, when an unknown vehicle hit him.

See **AUTOPSY**, page A6

Child with local ties selected as player escort at FIFA World Cup

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — A child with local ties has been chosen to participate in one of the world's largest sporting events.

Eight-year-old Port Charlotte, Florida, resident Elaina Brown has been selected to participate as a player escort during the FIFA World Cup Bronze Medal Match at 5 p.m. July 18 in Miami, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that will place her on the field alongside some of the world's top soccer players.

Brown, the daughter of Buchanan native Brent Brown and Niles native Ameila Betts, earned the honor through a special employee program sponsored by Frito-Lay, where participants were selected from employee family entries. As a player escort, she will accompany one of the athletes onto the field during the pre-match ceremonies, becoming part of one of the most prestigious sporting events in the world.

The FIFA World Cup draws millions of fans from across the globe. Brown's parents believe the experience will provide unforgettable memories and a unique behind-the-scenes look at international soccer's biggest stage.

"This is an incredible experience for Elaina and something she'll remember for the rest of her life," said her father Brent Brown, a Frito-Lay employee. "We're grateful for the opportunity and excited to see her be part of such a historic event."

Photo provided

Port Charlotte, Florida, resident Elaina Brown has been selected to participate as a player escort during the FIFA World Cup Bronze Medal Match at 5 p.m. July 18 in Miami.

BERRIEN COUNTY

County board chooses Vlietstra as next admin

Contract negotiations on docket next week

By JULIE SWIDWA
Paxton Media Group

ST. JOSEPH — If all goes as planned, Berrien County will hire a new county administrator next week.

VLIETSTRA

The county board, after much deliberation, voted unanimously Thursday to offer the position to Greg Vlietstra of Kalamazoo and enter into contract negotiations.

If a contract is agreed upon, the board will vote next week to finalize the hiring.

Vlietstra, one of two finalists for the position, was chosen as the favored candidate over Kipling Belcher, a retired Michigan State Police commander.

The vote came after meet-and-greet sessions with county department heads, hour-long final interviews with each candidate, and over an hour of deliberation by the county board.

Vlietstra has served for the past 10 years as chief administrative officer at the Central County Transportation Authority in Kalamazoo. Prior to that, he was chief deputy county treasurer for Kalamazoo, a business and operations manager for Galesburg-Augusta Schools, finance director for Kalamazoo

See **VLIETSTRA**, page A6

Today's obituaries • Page A3

Harold Jones
Barbara A. Grady
Sharron Leigh Cooney
Dr. Nancy Westrate
James D. Cook

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Farm-fresh delicacies

Buchanan's Verdant Hollow Farm offers special selection of goat cheeses, meats, produce

Jane Ammeson

Six years ago, I followed a winding country road as it dipped and rose past fields and farmland, all the way to Verdant Hollow Farm (VHF), located on Garr Road outside of Buchanan.

A 225-acre stretch of hilly land dotted with sheep, pigs, chickens and goats, it's an Animal Welfare Approved farm, using regenerative organic practices to produce seasonal vegetables, certified 100 percent grass-fed lamb, goat's milk, heritage pork and more.

But it's also the go-to place for goat hugs (when the baby goats, who are born in the spring, are still young enough to be cuddled – because you probably don't want to hug a grown goat). You can also take a goat hike on the property – an excursion through the fields and woods accompanied by some of the 80 or so goats living on the farm.

I know it seems like I've been writing a lot about goats recently, so I hope you can bear with me for one more column where goats take center stage.

The farm's offerings have grown since I first visited all those years ago. Besides the goat hikes (every Saturday), there's a farm store, open on Saturdays, where you can buy products including goat meat and pork, fresh organic pasture-raised eggs, seasonal vegetables and goat milk soap. They've also started making goat cheese.

VHF, which was founded in 2016, sits on land owned by Susan Flynn, who lives nearby, and is farmed by Amy and Brett Muchow. I was drawn back there four years ago when they received a MDARD Underserved, Value Added and Regional Food Systems Grant, designed to help in converting an existing farm structure into a licensed Michigan farmstead creamery and farm store.

After an immense amount of work, the creamery opened in August 2024. Coincidentally, August is also National Goat Cheese Month. VHF is now one of the few licensed farmstead goat creameries in Michigan. They make a variety of cheeses, including a Farmstead Chèvre, made fresh every week, and a Seasonal Chevre, which contains ingredients like ramps and nettles foraged from their woods and meadows in the spring.

Moonlet is their interpretation of a bloomy rind ash-ripened French Valençay cheese, and Mother-of-Pearl is their take on a bloomy rind French Crottin de Chavignol. They also make a Bulgarian-style feta cheese.

You can join their Cheese Club, which offers a selection of all cheeses available from the creamery at time of pick-up – a mix of chèvres, bloomy rinds and their signature Bulgarian Feta.

Running both a creamery and farm with hundreds of animals – overseeing breeding, spring birthing, milking and everything else that goes along with farm life – is a complex and time-consuming business. It would seem busy enough, but they also plan on adding guest cabins in the future, and currently have an 1860s-era barn, reimagined by award-winning architect Stanley Tigerman, available for rental for those who want to experience a farm-cation.

In addition to various other workers, the Muchows' three sons help out on the farm when they're not in school. The goats are overseen by two large dogs who guard against coyotes and other predators. But ultimately, the Muchows are propelled by their love of the land and a desire to produce wholesome food.

Before the farm, Brett, a National Board Certified Teacher, spent time teaching in South Korea, the South Side of Chicago and Northwest Indiana. Molly was a professional chef. She worked for Flynn, which is how they all met.

Their farm is gaining notice. Houndstooth, a restaurant in Benton Harbor, uses their products. Granor Farm, a 400-acre organic farm in Three Oaks, which hosts wonderful dinners in their 7,336-square-foot custom-made greenhouse every weekend (reservations needed), recently had a dinner using cheeses and meats from VHF.

"We're big fans of Verdant Hollow cheeses," said Alex Skrzypczyk, chef at Granor Farm.

Chef Erin Stanley, the kitchen manager of Granor's culinary team, used Verdant Hollow Farm's chèvre and chèvre with wild ramp and nettle, whipped chèvre butter with assorted breads, Spanish chorizo, marinated olives and farm vegetables to assemble a cheese board.

Their products are not only available at the farm store, but also at a variety of retailers: Farmette in New Buffalo, P&E Bottle Shop in Three Oaks, Granor Farm, Houndstooth, Out There in Sawyer and Stranger Wine Tasting Room in Buchanan. Check out the VHF website for more information (verdanthollowfarms.com).

Photos provided / Verdant Hollow Farm

A selection of cheeses made at Verdant Hollow Farm, one of the few goat cheese creameries in the state.

Goat walks through Verdant Hollow Farm's meadows and woods take place on Saturdays.

The goats at Verdant Hollow Farm are friendly and interactive. The farm offers baby goat hug encounters in the spring.

Houndstooth's Everything Bagel Crunch Salad

For the Everything Bagel Crunch:

2 tablespoons fennel seeds
2 tablespoons black cumin/ Nigella seed
2 tablespoons coriander seed
2 tablespoons poppy seeds
6 tablespoons sesame seeds
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup fried garlic
100 grams bagel chips

In a dry pan, toast fennel, cumin and coriander seeds for a couple of minutes, until fragrant.

Place bagel chips in a food processor, grinding until roughly chopped. Add toasted seeds, poppy and sesame seeds, garlic and salt. Pulse to reach uniform consistency (should be the texture of panko breadcrumbs).

Store in dry container.

For the Maple Tahini Dressing:

500 grams tahini
20 grams tamari
20 grams apple cider vinegar
8 grams garlic cloves
28 grams lemon juice
5 grams nutritional yeast
15 grams maple syrup
40 grams cold water
Pinch of salt

In a blender, add all the ingredients except water and salt. Puree until smooth, then add water and salt.

For the salad:

1 bunch kale, washed, dried and chopped into bite-sized pieces
1 to 2 pounds beets, roasted, peeled and chopped

Roast the beets (you can also use pickled or canned), skin and chop into bite-sized pieces.

Wash and drain kale, then tear into small pieces. In a bowl, toss with the dressing, adding a pinch of salt. Mix well.

Assemble: Add the desired amount of goat cheese in the bottom of a serving bowl, using a spoon to line the bottom of the bowl. Add the dressed kale, sprinkle with lots of crunch over the salad and garnish with beets.

Houndstooth's Whipped Goat Feta with Red Pepper Jam

2 ounces soft cream cheese
6 ounces goat cheese or goat feta
2 tablespoon heavy cream
Pinch of Salt
Red Pepper Jam (see note below)

Mix all the first four ingredients together. Place in serving bowl. Top with several dollops of jam.

Note: At Houndstooth, they top their whipped goat cheese ("Verdant Hollow's goat feta would work too," said Cheyenne Galbraith, executive chef and owner of Houndstooth) with red pepper jam made from last year's harvest.

Granor Farm's Whipped Chèvre Butter

"Fresh chèvre and butter are whipped until light and airy, then folded with rosemary, thyme, pink peppercorn and smoked salt," reads the introduction to this recipe from Granor Farm. "This recipe comes from Siam, the newest member of our kitchen team, and was featured during a recent dinner collaboration showcasing Verdant Hollow Farm. The fluffy, savory spread is delicious served with warm bread, crackers or crisp vegetables."

4 ounces fresh chèvre, softened
4 ounces unsalted butter, softened
1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1 teaspoon fresh thyme, finely chopped
1 teaspoon pink peppercorns, finely ground
1/2 teaspoon smoked salt

In a mixing bowl, combine chèvre and softened butter. Using a stand mixer, hand mixer or whisk, whip vigorously until the mixture becomes airy and fluffy.

Add rosemary, thyme, pink peppercorns and smoked salt. Mix until evenly incorporated.

Taste, adjusting seasoning as needed. Serve immediately, or refrigerate until ready to use. Allow to soften slightly before serving.

Spoon into a serving bowl, creating soft swoops and peaks, and finish with a sprinkle of pink peppercorns, thyme leaves and smoked salt.

Jane Ammeson can be contacted via email at janeammeson@gmail.com or by writing to Focus, The Herald-Palladium, P.O. Box 128, St. Joseph, MI 49085.

FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ Thank you to the City of Niles for working out the electricity issues during the stormy weather.

■ Regarding Meijer, why are we not embracing a store that brings jobs, more options and a pharmacy to our area? We lack a pharmacy on the west side of Niles, particularly for Buchanan and Galien areas.

■ I was amazed at the lack of common sense some drivers showed while navigating the electricity outage that affected the Niles street lights. Even without lights an experienced driver should be able exhibit good defensive driving skills.

■ I'm really glad that the townships are seriously putting some thought and research into data centers. I've seen so many communities that have regretted allowing them in their area.

■ It's disheartening that some people can't see the benefits that a new Meijer could bring to Niles.

■ I'm not against data centers. I'm against being kept in the dark on issues pertaining to them and the fear of never being able to open my windows ever again without hearing a loud humming noise.

WEATHER

Sunday: Showers likely, with thunderstorms also possible after 5 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 75. Light southeast wind increasing to 5 to 10 mph in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

Sunday Night: Showers and possibly a thunderstorm before 2 a.m., then showers likely. Low around 56. Chance of precipitation is 90 percent. New rainfall amounts between 1 and 2 inches possible.

Monday: Showers likely, mainly before 8 a.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 73. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 52.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 75.

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Photos by Corey Williams / AP

The exterior of the reconstructed Jackson House is seen during a ribbon cutting June 12 at The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn.

Home where King planned Selma marches opens at Henry Ford Museum

By COREY WILLIAMS
Associated Press

The Henry Ford Museum President and Chief Executive Patricia Mooradian, left, and Jawana Jackson pose for a photo outside Jackson's reconstructed family home June 12.

DEARBORN — A home where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders planned strategies during the Civil Rights movement in the Deep South has been rebuilt at a Michigan museum after being dismantled and hauled from Alabama.

The daughter of the original owners last week helped open the Jackson House on the grounds of The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, just outside Detroit. The house is among more than 80 other historic structures in the museum's Greenfield Village.

Several hundred people attended a ceremonial ribbon cutting and cheered as Jawana Jackson and Henry Ford Museum President and Chief Executive Patricia Mooradian walked through the front door of the 3,000-square-foot bungalow.

Jackson said that Ford Motor Co. founder and industrialist Henry Ford built Greenfield Village to tell the story of America. "This, the Jackson family home, is part of that story," she continued.

Owned by dentist Sullivan Jackson and his wife, Richie Jean, the home in Selma, Alabama, was where King and others in 1965 discussed three Selma-to-Montgomery marches against Jim Crow laws that prevented Black people from voting.

King was inside the home when President Lyndon Johnson announced a bill that would become the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The role the Jackson House played was integral to the Civil Rights Movement. Jawana Jackson contacted the museum in 2022 to have it take over the home's preservation and legacy. The museum bought the home in 2023 for an undisclosed price.

Mooradian called the home a symbol for the support of all and the "pursuit of justice and dignity and equality during one of the most defining chapters in our nation's history."

"We're opening a doorway to history," Mooradian said. "A place where an ordinary family chose to risk their lives to do something extraordinary. A place where conviction was tested. A movement was sheltered and nourished in this home, and where parents led with courage for the sake of their little girl."

In 2023, crews began taking apart the house piece by piece. It was trucked more than 800 miles north to Dearborn, where the house was carefully reconstructed. Original artifacts, including the chair King sat in while he watched Johnson's televised announcement, also were brought north.

Other items found in homes during the 1960s have been added to complete the exhibit.

The house was built in 1912 and served as a guesthouse for Black authors W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, who held "fireside chats" regarding education, religion, the arts, community building and economic sustainability, according to the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium.

Jawana Jackson, who was 4 years old in 1965 and refers to King as "Uncle Martin," connected the home's history in the fight for voting rights during the 1960s with current attacks on those rights.

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court knocked out a major pillar of the law that had protected against racial discrimination in voting and representation. Three years ago, justices voted 5-4 to strip the government of its most potent tool to stop voting bias – the requirement in the Voting Rights Act that all or parts of 15 states with a history of discrimination in voting, mainly in the South, get Washington's approval before changing the way they hold elections.

"We are still trying to protect democracy," Jackson said Friday. "What Uncle Martin did in this house all those many years ago continues today."

Pizza Hut chain will be sold for $2.7 billion

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AND DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writers

Pizza Hut, the 68-year-old chain that has long struggled with growing competition and outdated restaurants, will be sold for $2.7 billion by parent company Yum Brands.

Yum Brands said Tuesday that the private equity firm LongRange Capital will buy Pizza Hut, excluding the mainland China business, for about $1.5 billion.

In mainland China, Pizza Hut will be purchased by Yum China Holdings Inc. for approximately $1.2 billion, the company said. China is Pizza Hut's second-largest market outside the U.S., accounting for 19 percent of sales. Yum China Holdings Inc. spun off from Yum Brands and became an independent company in 2016.

Yum Brands, which also owns KFC and Taco Bell, began to explore its options for Pizza Hut in November. Last year, Yum Brands' global sales rose 5 percent but Pizza Hut's sales fell 2 percent.

In February, Yum Brands announced plans to close 250 U.S. Pizza Hut locations.

OBITUARIES

Harold Jones

October 4, 1930 – June 9, 2026

Harold "Jonesy" Jones, 95, of Dowagiac, passed away on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at The Timbers of Cass County in Dowagiac. He was born October 4, 1930, in Sherwood, MI, the oldest of Lynn & Esther (Schrader) Jones.

The family will receive guests from 11am until time of celebration of life service at 12pm, Monday, June 15, 2026, at Clark Chapel, 405 Center St., Dowagiac, with Pastor Boyd Saylor officiating. Burial to follow at Indian Lake Cemetery, Dowagiac. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be given to the Dowagiac Conservation Club, P.O. Box 424, 54551 M51 North, Dowagiac MI 49047. Those wishing to share a memory or leave condolences are invited to visit his personalized webpage at www.clarkch.com.

Harold, age 95, passed away leaving behind a legacy of hard work, service, and kindness. In his younger years, he was a versatile athlete, playing football, basketball, and baseball. He proudly enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1951 and was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming, and Paine Air Force Base in Washington. During his military service, he was deployed to North Africa before receiving an honorable discharge. After his service, Harold moved to Dowagiac in 1956 and built a successful career as a mechanical engineer, working for Stovers, Smith Brothers, and Clark Equipment in both Cassopolis and Buchanan until his retirement in 1991. He was an active member of the Dowagiac American Legion, the Conservation Club, and the Moose Club. Harold had a passion for travel and visited every state in the nation except Hawaii. In 1974, he met his beloved travel partner, Melba Collins, and together they enjoyed many years of traveling throughout the United States and Canada until her passing in 2010. Known throughout the neighborhood as a true jack-of-all-trades, Harold was always willing to lend a hand and never missed an opportunity to help others. His generosity, practical skills, and caring spirit touched countless lives and will be remembered by all who knew him.

Harold will be missed by his children, Connie Checkley, Tina (Dallas Shirey) Jones, and Molly (Raymond) Yank; grandchildren, Craig (Jill) Checkley, Kurt (Lori) Checkley, Jeremy Goble, Kisha Checkley, Katharine Hess, Joshua (Monica) Jones, Robert (Kelli) Checkley, Matthew Wysocki, Andrew (Courtney) Jones, Jordan Wysocki, Alec (Shellie) Yank, and Amber (Moriah) Yank; great-grandchildren, Kaitlyn (Steven) Pena, Nathan Tackitt, Zachary (Rebekah) Checkley, Karlie Checkley, Jared Checkley, Kole Checkley, Lucas Szymczak, Braelyn Rogers, Ty Goble, Nolan Yank, Hailey Hess, Cooper Szymczak, Allison Hess, Tucker Yank, Cruz Goble, Adrienne Hess, Karsyn Yank, Mckenna Checkley, Teagan Checkley, Perrin Checkley, Isla Jones, Elsie Jones, Jones Yank, and Molly Grace Yank on the way; great-great-grandchildren, Chase Pena, Amora Murray-Tackitt, Hudson Pena, John Checkley, and Charlotte Checkley; sister, Mary Mockler; and a host of good friends and neighbors.

He is preceded in death by his son, Larry Jones; his life partner, Melba Collins; his grandchildren, Stacey Goble, Tillman Goble; and Rebecca Jones; his brother, Eugene Jones; his son-in-law, John Checkley; his brother-in-law, Stephen Mockler; and his parents.

The family would like to thank Dr. Mohammed Rangwala, Dr. Oliver Sonlingco, and the staff at the Timbers for their loving care.

Sharron Leigh Cooney

January 23, 1941 – March 17, 2026

Born in International Falls, MN on January 23, 1941, she was the only child of Ruth Stone and Arnold Peterson (originally from Bergen, Norway). Sharron moved to Southern Michigan with her mother in 1943, where she subsequently attended a one-room country school, a boarding school in South Bend, IN, high school in Cassopolis, MI, then freshman year at Texas Women's Univ. in Denton, TX, finishing her education at Western Michigan Univ. in Kalamazoo, MI.

After college she moved to San Diego (Pacific Beach) in 1962 and began her career as a legal secretary and later a paralegal. She married and divorced twice before going to work at the Municipal Court, where she met and married Judge Robert J. Cooney. In 1989, the Cooneys retired to their Lake Cuyamaca home. Unfortunately, and too soon, Judge Cooney died in June 1990.

Sharron then began many years of volunteer work. First, returning to the courthouse, then the Julian Chamber of Commerce, the Cuyamaca Volunteer Fire Department and the Julian Triangle Club (serving as club President for 4 years and performing in the Apple Days Melodrama for 19 years).

She thoroughly loved and enjoyed life, traveling often to the British Isles, most of Europe, So. America, Hawaii, Mexico and all but two of the United States. Her favorite holiday was Christmas and it usually took four days to decorate EVERY room in the house. Her gourmet dinners, Mardi Gras and Kentucky Derby parties will be missed by all who knew her. After losing her home in the 2003 Cedar Fire (and then rebuilding in 2005), she remained in Cuyamaca for another 10 years. She sold her home in 2015 and moved to her Baja beach house, where she often said, "Life was perfect."

Having won her battles with stage 4 cancer in 2006, breast cancer in 2018, and a third bout with cancer in 2020 (as well as struggling with diabetes for 16 years), on the advice of her doctors, she moved back to San Diego, settling at Casa Aldea in University City and later at Waterford Terrace in La Mesa.

She was extremely proud of her family and their many accomplishments: son Eric Rapp, daughters Jennifer Rapp and Elizabeth Renshaw; her granddaughters, Dr. Maisie Rapp and Dr. Savannah Morgan, all of whom survive.

Her beloved grandson, Jordan Johnson, predeceased her in 2021.

Her companions, Richard Rose and 12-year-old terrier, Chloe, also survive.

Interment was held at Glen Abbey in Bonita with her grandson and a memorial was held on April 17th at Waterford Terrace in La Mesa, California. In lieu of flowers, donations to ASPCA would be appreciated.

Death notices

Barbara A. Grady, 91, of Cassopolis, Michigan, died June 16, 2026, at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel.

Dr. Nancy Lynn Westrate, Ph.D.

March 10, 1955 – June 13, 2026

The world lost a most remarkable woman on the 13th of June 2026, not least because of the intelligence, compassion and courage manifest in her challenging 71 years on this Earth. The life of Nancy Westrate demonstrates just how brilliantly eclectic a modern woman maybe, even in this very confused time.

It wasn't easy for the beautiful little redhead to assert herself in a house filled with brothers, but she nonetheless did. And it soon became clear that, armed with such considerable determination, Nancy would make a name for herself. Always a superb student, she discovered early on a facility with languages which fed a lifelong curiosity about the wider world and its peoples. Nancy's curiosity about these things was insatiable and, at times, boundless.

Unable and unwilling to resist the urge to travel widely, she considered, then rejected a career as a flight attendant, for that of a peripatetic scholar. Nancy graduated from Cassopolis High School in 1972 before matriculating at Michigan State University, from which she graduated with honors in 1976. While there, she conducted graduate research in Merida, Mexico. For this, Nancy was the recipient of the Ella Cowles Award for Outstanding Achievement in Romance Languages in 1976.

She then entered a graduate program in Anthropology at Duke University, where she won a Fulbright Fellowship to conduct research in the foothills of the Andes in Argentina on populist movements in San Juan and Mendoza. In 1993, Nancy was awarded a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from Duke.

She proved an especially fine translator of scholarly works, expertise for which she became particularly well-known during her career as an independent scholar. Especially notable were two works: Corn and Capitalism, by Arturo Warman and Voices of the Enslaved in 19 th-Century Cuba by Gloria Garcia Rodriguez, in which her work was praised by reviewers as "artistically meticulous." Nancy explored widely in Mexico, Central America and South America.

She even travelled to Cuba during an era when special dispensation was required from bureaucrats on both sides of the Cold War. Yet throughout this colorful and fulfilling life, the prospect of family was never far from her primary focus. She met her husband Gustavo De Luca while in Mexico and they married shortly thereafter. He joined her in Durham, entering the school of architecture there, a field in which he would excel.

Together they had four children: Javier (Desiree), Christina Sheahan (foster), Amadeo (Joy), Ansilta, and Oceania. Nancy is survived by three brothers: Bruce (Sally), Joel (Patty), and Eric (Barbara). Her brother Mark (Joan) predeceased her in 2013.

Despite considerable health challenges during her married life, Nancy remained the ever-engaged, ever-present, ever-expectant Tiger Mom who wanted nothing but the absolute best for her children. The wonderful vitality, achievement and devotion of her adult brood most surely confirm her success in this. No less authority than Winston Churchill once pointed out the greatest limitation on his craft: There is no history, he is supposed to have cautioned; there is only biography. By this he meant simply that it was the characteristics of history's elect which account for the causes and consequences of those many storied events over which we tend to obsess.

Yet it is the essence of history's participants, from the famous to the obscure, the altruistic to the narcissistic, the very good to the very bad, which accounts most for the direction of human history, human civilization. In this, Nancy proved an extraordinary participant.

James D. Cook

November 8, 1950 – June 16, 2026

James D. Cook, 75, of Niles, died peacefully Tuesday June 16, 2026. His life began November 8, 1950 in South Bend Indiana, the first of two children born to James and Marge Cook. Jim graduated from Clay High School and then went on to serve his country in the Army National Guard. Jim was a hard worker and business man. He did machining and tool and die making for many years. Jim owned the Shell station at the Eastgate Shopping Center and then he operated Yankee Street Storage.

Jim traveled the country with his son and many friends drag racing. He loved to take the time for photography and bird watching. Jim was an avid animal lover, his favorite being his dog, Roxie. Later in life, he was able to travel, visiting, Africa, Galapagos Islands and other beautiful places. Most of all, he loved spending time with his grandson any chance he could get.

Jim will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by one son, Andrew (Julie) Cook of Niles; one grandson, Logan Cook of Niles; companion of over forty years of Niles, Susan Cook; one brother, Gary (Diana) Cook of Edwardsburg and one cousin, Katie Hanson of Portage.

A private service has taken place.

Contributions in memory of Jim may be made Pet Refuge 4626 S Burnett Dr, South Bend, Indiana 46614. Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

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Don Campbell / PMG file photo

A GoldStars Tribute Wall traveling memorial honors the 7,200 men and women killed while serving in the U.S. military from the beginning of the Gulf War through the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, during Lest We Forget's "The Sandbox Wars," on June 21, 2025, in St. Joseph.

Lest We Forget slates reenactment weekend

Revolutionary War at forefront of this year's event

By PMG STAFF

ST. JOSEPH — Lest We Forget of Southwest Michigan is planning their annual reenactment weekend scheduled for July 18-19 at Riverview Park in St. Joseph.

Previous themes have included World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the U.S. Navy, women in service, the Cold War, the 80th anniversary of the D-Day and Saipan Battles and in 2025 the Sandbox Wars of Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan. This year, Lest We Forget will highlight the semiquincentennial, marking the 250th anniversary of the United States.

The Revolutionary War reenactment weekend will feature camp life, parade of military uniforms and civilian dress, tomahawk throwing, music and dance and two 1776-era war battles per day. The North West Territory Alliance is an American Revolutionary War reenactment organization located in the Midwest, who are taking center stage in St. Joseph this summer.

They have more than 500 members from states as far west as Iowa, east to Ohio, north to the Canadian border, and south to Tennessee. They are a nonprofit that recreates culture, lifestyle and arts of the time of the American Revolution, from 1775-83. They strive to duplicate the uniforms, weapons, battlefield tactics and camp life of the era as accurately as possible.

The weekend begins both Saturday and Sunday with a pancake breakfast from 7-10 a.m. Naturalists from the Sarett Nature Center will give the public rides on the St. Joseph River in its 35-foot voyageur canoe. The canoe, which holds up to 19 people, were used extensively for the fur trade from the 1600s until about 1870, when the French-Canadian voyageurs were trading with Native Americans.

A naturalist will be in the front of the canoe with a steersman in the back, while riders help paddle. Rides are open to any age according to a Sarett spokesperson, but young children must be accompanied by adults. Life jackets will be provided. Rides will last from 20 to 30 minutes.

Military organizations, veteran groups and 18th century history displays are invited to reserve a spot by contacting www.lestweforgetusa.org/contact.

All activities are open and free to the public. Helicopter rides will be offered for $60 cash and $65 credit card.

Lest We Forget will fly a field of 250 flags at Whirlpool Centennial Park, line the fence at St. Joseph High School with flags and has sponsored the bluff stairs mural.

At 6 p.m. July 8, St. Joseph will lift its voice in a synchronized reading of the Declaration of Independence with communities across the nation and the world.

Event organizers said this isn't a reenactment – but a renewal.

"We're inviting every citizen to Whirlpool Centennial Park to witness the Declaration of Independence being read by Pat Moody," the news release stated. "The Declaration's words – 'all men are created equal' – were proclaimed by a small circle of wealthy, well-educated men in powdered wigs, many of whom denied those very rights to others. And yet those words sparked unfinished revolutions: abolishing slavery; restoring and lifting indigenous voices; expanding the vote; welcoming immigrants; empowering civil rights and labor movements; sending girls to school – then into laboratories – legislatures – and low Earth orbit."

Artists prepare for inaugural 'Take A Seat' Chair Auction

By PMG STAFF

NILES — Creativity, community, and local art will take center stage in Downtown Niles on Saturday, August 8, 2026, during the inaugural Take A Seat Chair Auction, a unique fundraiser featuring one-of-a-kind chairs transformed by local and regional artists.

Hosted by the Niles Main Street Design Committee in partnership with the Niles Art Association, the event challenges artists to turn ordinary chairs, benches, stools, and other seating into functional works of art. As pieces are completed, they will be displayed in the windows of downtown businesses, creating a walking gallery for residents and visitors to enjoy in the weeks leading up to the auction.

On August 8, the chairs will be gathered at the NODE at 2nd and Main Streets for public viewing beginning at noon. The live auction will start at 2 p.m., giving attendees the opportunity to bid on original, handcrafted pieces while supporting local arts and community initiatives.

Proceeds from the auction will be shared between the Niles Main Street Design Committee and the Niles Art Association to support downtown beautification projects, public art programs, and future community events.

According to Take A Seat Auction Chairperson and local artist Sandy Williams, the event is designed to celebrate creativity while bringing people together in support of the arts.

"The Take A Seat Chair Auction is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the talent and imagination of local artists while bringing people together in downtown Niles," Williams said. "Each chair becomes a unique piece of art with its own personality and story. We're excited to see the creativity on display and grateful for the support this event will provide to both the Niles Main Street Design Committee and the Niles Art Association."

The live auction will be conducted by Trisha Wainscott of Wainscott Auctions.

"We're thrilled to have Trisha Wainscott serving as our auctioneer," said Niles Main Street Design Committee Chair Fredda Zeiter. "Her enthusiasm and experience will make the auction both entertaining and engaging for bidders and spectators alike."

The fun continues after the auction with a free performance by Van Dyke Revue from 5 to 8 p.m. at The NODE. Known for their crowd-pleasing mix of classic favorites and high-energy performances, the band will cap off a day dedicated to art, community, and downtown Niles.

Visitors are encouraged to spend the day exploring downtown shops, restaurants, and attractions. Food and beverages will be available for purchase from local businesses, and adults 21 and older may enjoy beverages purchased from participating establishments within Downtown Niles' Social District while enjoying the event at The NODE.

Whether you're an art enthusiast, collector, or simply looking for a fun day downtown, Take A Seat offers a unique opportunity to support local artists and take home a truly one-of-a-kind creation.

For more information about the event or how to get involved, visit www.uncoverniles.com.

IN BRIEF

Woman injured in two-vehicle Jefferson Township crash

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP — An Otsego woman was injured Saturday in a two-vehicle crash in Jefferson Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 1:30 p.m., Deputies from the Cass County Sheriff's Office responded to a motor vehicle accident involving two vehicles at the intersection of M-60 and Daily Rd in Jefferson Township, Cass County, Michigan.

The investigation showed that a vehicle driven by 79-year-old Sharon Pixler, of Otsego, was traveling southbound on Daily and while attempting to enter M-60 was struck by a vehicle driven by 31-year-old Alison Kobiernik, of New Carlisle, Ind., traveling westbound on Daily Road.

Pixler was transported by SMCAS ambulance to Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital for injuries sustained in the crash. Assisting agencies were SMCAS Ambulance and Cassopolis Police Department.

Drugs and Alcohol are not believed to have been a factor in this incident.

One injured in two-vehicle Porter Township crash

One man was hospitalized Saturday following a two-vehicle crash in Porter Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 6:58 p.m., deputies responded to a two-vehicle crash in the area of M-40 and Teasdale Lake Street in Porter Township.

The investigation showed that a vehicle driven by 20-yeaar-old Dylan Burkey, of Constantine, was eastbound on Teasdale Lake Street when he disregarded the stop sign and entered the M-40-Teasdale Lake Street intersection. 25-year-old Abdul Yaqubi, of Thornton, Co., who was traveling southbound on M-40, collided with Burkey. Yaqubi was transported by SEPSA to Elkhart General Hospital for injuries sustained in the crash.

Assisting agencies on scene were SEPSA Fire and Ambulance and True's Towing.

The crash remains under investigation.

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OPINION

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All letters should include a daytime telephone number and street address for verification. Letters must be 500 words or fewer. Leader Publications reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, grammar, inappropriate content and libel.

Spending time with the stars

Cate Christinidis

One of the (many) fantastic things about living in Southwest Michigan is our simultaneous proximity and distance from major metropolises.

We're close enough to Chicago or Detroit to pop over for a concert, but far enough away that our night skies aren't stained orange by city lights.

In college, I took several astronomy courses. At the time, this felt out of character for me – I despised science in high school. But upon entering college, I quickly came to find that I loved it. My professor, Dr. James Lowenthal, played a major role in this transformation, and his determined advocacy for eliminating light pollution stuck with me well beyond graduation.

Growing up just outside the city of Detroit, it wasn't uncommon to see stars. From my backyard, I could point out a number of constellations. But their shine was dim, and I knew there were billions masked by the city's glow.

It's one reason I refer to my late grandparents' cottage, located in rural Wisconsin, as my favorite place in the world; on any given clear night, if I looked up, the sky would be freckled with stars, not an inch left un-dotted. As a child, I thought I was looking at the entire universe.

Recently, that same childlike wonder was reignited by Southwest Michigan's night skies. Arriving home late from rehearsal at Twin City Players, I glanced up, thrilled to see Ursa Major (the Big Dipper) directly above me, like a celestial halo. And, beyond that, sprawled out in every direction, millions upon millions of diamond-bright stars.

Michigan is home to three International Dark Sky Parks, one of which is located in Cass County. The Dr. T. K. Lawless Park, 15122 Monkey Run St., Jones, is both an International Dark Sky Park and a Michigan Dark Sky Preserve.

Numerous times throughout the year, the park extends its hours for late-night stargazing. There are several opportunities this summer: July 17 and 18, Aug. 11 and 12 (Perseid Meteor Shower), Aug. 14 and 15, and Sept. 11 and 12.

A starry sky is certainly a beautiful backdrop for any late evening, but it also gives residents and visitors alike the opportunity to establish a new hobby – or expand upon a pre-existing one.

Contact: cchristinidis@TheHP.com

How can homeowners keep air conditioners running efficiently?

By ANGIE HICKS
Ask Angi (TNS)

Simple seasonal maintenance, like replacing air filters and clearing debris around outdoor units, can help homeowners keep air conditioning systems running efficiently all summer long.
Dreamstime / TNS

As temperatures rise and summer settles in, many homeowners are relying on their air conditioning systems more than they have in months. But after sitting relatively unused through cooler seasons, air conditioners often need a little attention to perform at their best.

The good news is that a few simple maintenance steps can help homeowners stay comfortable, improve energy efficiency and potentially avoid costly repairs during the hottest stretch of the year.

One of the easiest and most important places to start is replacing your air filter. Dirty or clogged filters restrict airflow, forcing your air conditioning system to work harder to cool your home. That added strain can increase energy bills, reduce cooling performance and shorten the lifespan of your system over time. Most homeowners should replace filters every one to three months, though homes with pets, allergies or heavier AC use may benefit from more frequent changes. If you can't remember the last time you changed your filter, now is probably the right time.

Homeowners should also pay attention to the outdoor condenser unit, which plays an important role in keeping air circulating properly. Leaves, grass clippings, dirt or overgrown landscaping around the unit can block airflow and reduce efficiency. Giving the unit at least a couple feet of clearance and clearing away debris can help it run more effectively during periods of heavy use.

Inside the home, small adjustments can also make a meaningful difference. Make sure vents aren't blocked by furniture, rugs or curtains, and pay attention to how evenly your home is cooling. Rooms that suddenly feel warmer than others, weak airflow, unusual noises or a system that seems to run constantly may be early signs that your air conditioner isn't operating as efficiently as it should.

Air conditioning has a way of struggling at the least convenient time usually during a heat wave when you need it most. It's one of those home systems many of us don't think about until there's a problem, which is why a little preventative maintenance before peak summer temperatures can go a long way.

For homeowners looking to maximize efficiency, it may also be worth considering a programmable or smart thermostat. Setting temperatures slightly higher while you're away and cooling the home when needed can help reduce energy use without sacrificing comfort. Sealing drafts around windows and doors or adding insulation can also help keep cool air inside and reduce strain on your system.

Scheduling an annual HVAC maintenance visit is another smart step, especially before temperatures peak. A skilled pro can inspect refrigerant levels, clean coils, test components, and identify small issues before they become bigger and more expensive problems. Seasonal maintenance visits often cost far less than emergency repairs during the height of summer.

Your air conditioning system works hard to keep your home comfortable during the hottest months of the year. Taking a little time now to help it run efficiently can make a meaningful difference in comfort, energy costs and peace of mind all summer long.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Americans should insist on truth

Editor,

It is purported that the fundamental goal in implementing President Trump's America first policy is to make the nation safer strong, stronger and more prosperous, according to Tommy Pickett, a state department spokesperson.

What are Trump's goals? Massive deregulation, sweeping tariffs, tax cuts, drill-baby-drill policies to increase domestic gas and oil, mass deportations, ending birthright citizenship, dismantling of federal agencies, eliminating DEI, ending foreign conflicts and war. And ominously proposing freedom cities on undeveloped federal land that will focus on his above mentioned goals and a new shot at the American dream.

Instead, what we have is a health care crisis, illegal deportations, higher commodity costs and expensive war, tariffs, troubled farming community, and more distrust in government. We have excessive spending on a ballroom, a proposed arch, a reflection pool and an unnecessary war. It is concerning that the present administration does not want input from experts that conflicts with the president's goals and budget priorities. Loyalty prevails over expertise at the expense of independent objective research and scientific based judgment. This approach undermines the credibility of our government and our reputation for integrity among other nations and many in our population.

We need to win back the pre-eminence of our identity as a nation that can be trusted to work with our allies and to promote respect for the rule of law rather than side step it. We deserve the right to insist on truth rather than accept lies for expediency.

Grace Gianforte
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BUCHANAN

Volunteer group aims to boost businesses

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Correspondent

Photo provided

Dozens of Buchanan residents turned out for the Buchanan Business Boosters' Lucky Duck Festival in March.

BUCHANAN — A group of Buchanan businesses, organizations and volunteers have banded together to promote the city.

Buchanan Business Boosters formed in January 2025 while downtown construction put major stress on those operating in the area. A handful of businesses started a group on Facebook to share communication and keep everyone on the same page. While the group was considering disbanding after the construction was complete, Dennis Mori was approaching the city with an idea to revive the Buchanan Labor Day event.

They directed him to the group and, with downtown events in mind, the group found a new purpose.

"It was a great group of business owners," Dennis said. "Everyone was very excited."

Mori said the group aims to promote businesses and events both in downtown Buchanan and the rest of the city. While creating events of their own, they are equally invested in boosting those organized by others.

"We want to include everybody," Mori said.

They chose the mission statement: "Bringing Buchanan Back, shop and dine with us."

Buchanan Business Boosters is working to make the city a positive place for existing businesses and a welcoming place for potential new ones. With the shared knowledge of nearly a dozen entrepreneurs, the group is ready to help others navigate regulatory processes, advise on store design and get to know local culture. The group works closely with the Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce and the Buchanan Downtown Development Authority.

The group organized a Valentine's Day event earlier in the year, during which they reported "a surge of visitors, full restaurants and a renewed sense of community pride," with sold out restaurants and standing room only in others.

The theme of the event, "Fall in Love with Buchanan again," highlighted the desire to win back customers who may have started to dine and shop elsewhere during the construction, as well as to widen the net to bring people from further away to the city.

"When someone can't get to their favorite store or favorite restaurant, sometimes they go other places," said Mori.

Work started immediately to create or help with other events, including the Lucky Kid's Festival for St. Patrick's Day, a Sip Buchanan event in May, and various Memorial Day festivities.

Mori listed several attractions that bring in customers from as far as Chicago, including antique stores, a variety of restaurants from fine dining to dive bars, and The Grant hotel inside McCollums.

The effort is powered by volunteers who want to see Buchanan continue to grow.

Information on local events and Buchanan Business Boosters can be found on Facebook by searching for their group.

Two Hartford men face narcotics, firearms charges

By PMG STAFF

HARTFORD — Two Hartford men are in custody following a raid and months-long narcotics trafficking investigation.

According to a news release, Southwest Enforcement Team detectives – along with the Michigan State Police Emergency Support Team, Paw Paw Post troopers, K-9 Unit and the Drug Enforcement Administration – executed a residential search warrant on June 11 at a residence on Marion Avenue in Hartford.

Investigators seized one long gun, five pistols, a pistol-to-rifle conversion kit and brass knuckles. One firearm had been reported stolen, and another was determined to be a privately manufactured "ghost gun" that lacked a serial number.

Police said they also seized about 26 grams of cocaine hydrochloride, digital scales, drug-packaging materials, and items commonly used in the manufacturing and distribution of controlled substances.

A 27-year-old Hartford man was arrested and lodged at the Van Buren County Jail on multiple felony charges, including receiving and concealing stolen property, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and possession with intent to deliver cocaine.

A 62-year-old Hartford man was also arrested and lodged at the jail on multiple felony charges, including possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession with intent to deliver cocaine, maintaining a drug house, and resisting and obstructing a police officer.

"SWET and its law enforcement partners remain committed to investigating and prosecuting narcotics trafficking to help ensure the safety and well-being of communities throughout Southwest Michigan," the release stated.

Residents are encouraged to report suspected drug activity by emailing MSP-PROTECT@michigan.gov or by leaving an anonymous message on the SWET tip line at 269-982-8664.

SWET is funded in part by the Michigan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program and the U.S. Department of Justice Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program and is administered by the Michigan State Police.

VLIETSTRA

From page A1

County, deputy director of purchasing and risk for the city of Portage, and assistant city manager for the city of Portage.

He has a master's degree in business administration and political science, and a bachelor's degree in political science and business administration.

During his interview, he said his priorities in his first 90 days, if hired for the position, would be finding his way around, assessing staff morale, identifying challenges and developing a report for the county board on those things.

According to their resumes, Belcher has more than 25 years of command-level experience with the MSP that included significant administration and budgetary experience; while Vlietstra packs along experience in finance, maintenance, human resources, technology, purchasing, grants and pension administration.

The county board is seeking to replace former county Administrator Brian Dissette, who left earlier this year for a new job. Retired Berrien County Prosecutor Mike Sepic is serving as interim administrator. The board of commissioners sets public policies while the administrator runs day-to-day operations.

Chet Janik, a consultant from the Michigan Leadership Institute, has been helping with the nationwide search. He said the initial search resulted in a total of 72 candidates, many of whom he was able to eliminate due to not meeting the qualifications for the job. Janik said he then whittled the field to 12 candidates and recommended the county board review.

Berrien County Commissioner Bob Harrison, chairman of the board's Personnel Committee, has been leading the process.

Berrien County Human Resources Director Kristin Reynolds said after meeting each candidate Thursday, department heads submitted many comments for the county board to consider. She said no clear winner emerged from the comments, as they were relatively similar for each candidate.

Vlietstra, according to his resume, has served in public administration for 26 years, the past 10 as chief administrative officer for the Central County Transportation Authority, which has 125 employees, including 35 who report to him, and a budget of more than $28 million.

In his initial interview with the county board last week, he listed humility, steadiness, accountability and being a resource for people as some of the top assets he would bring to Berrien County, saying, "It's not about ego. I never ask staff to do anything I wouldn't do myself."

He said municipalities need to prepare for tough financial times ahead, and he has the skills needed to balance priorities on a limited budget.

Vlietstra defined integrity as, "Doing the right thing even when no one is watching."

If selected for the job, Vlietstra said he looks forward to positive, open dialogue with staff, and identifying what they most need to help them be successful.

When asked whether he works closely with Lansing, he said in his current position, he does not have a lot of contact with state officials, but added, "I know it's important. If you're not at the table, you're on the menu."

Vlietstra said if hired, he would relocate his family to Berrien County.

"I was born and raised in Southwest Michigan. I would see this as a long-term commitment of 10-15 years. Moving is a challenge, and jumping around is not my style," he said.

County Board Vice Chairwoman Teri Freehling told Vlietstra the board is hoping to create a multi-year budget, and asked him if he is comfortable with that.

"I am. Projecting forward is good," he responded.

When asked how soon he could start if hired, Vlietstra said mid-August.

Board Chairman Mac Elliott said he is not certain whether Sepic would stay on as interim administrator until then.

"He had indicated he wanted to be done by summer," Elliott said.

When asked the same question regarding how soon he could start, if hired, Belcher responded, "Tonight."

During deliberations, the board acknowledged it was a tough decision, as both candidates appear well qualified.

"I can go either way. They both have great qualifications. We can't go wrong," said Commissioner Dave Vollrath.

Harrison commented, "I'm impressed with both candidates. This is a lot closer than I thought it would be."

In the end, Commissioner Julie Wuerfel made a motion to initiate negotiations with Vlietstra and, if all goes well, vote on an official hiring at next week's county board meeting.

Contact: jswidwa@thehp.com, Twitter: @HPSwidwa

AUTOPSY

From page A1

Clay said the person from the medical examiner's office had told him that his son was beaten to death – and wasn't hit by a vehicle.

"He said 85 percent of your son's bones were broken – crushed," Clay alleged.

On Thursday, Clay called on Roach to tell the truth regarding the circumstance of his son's death.

"Don't come with a lie because you tell one lie, you've got to tell another lie to cover that one up," Clay alleged. "Just tell the truth. We all make mistakes."

Johnson's mother, Morse Daniels of Benton Harbor, said she misses her son.

"He was a very, very respectful young man – never been in trouble or anything like that," Daniels said.

She said her son went to Cass County to visit a woman he had met online.

After he returned home, Daniels said he went back for a second visit the following week.

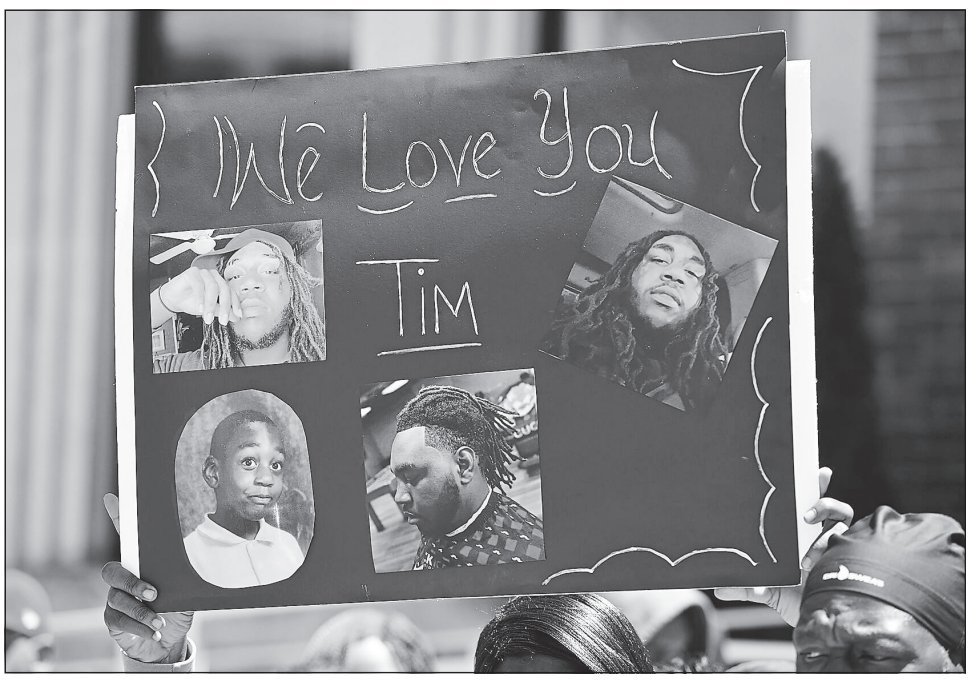
"I was at work. I kept on calling him. I kept Facetiming my son. I kept trying to get in contact with him, but he never called me back," she recalled. "He's not like that. He always calls me back."

She said she and Johnson's father went to the funeral home because they wanted to see their son.

"They beat him so bad. I just, I just don't know why anyone could do anything like that," Daniels alleged. "I just don't know how you could do something like that to another human."

Jackson said her brother's death has been very painful for their family.

"It's a lot of pain to lose your children, but to have someone take your child from you and then to have someone else trying to cover it up – come on now," Jackson said. "Are we still doing this in 2026? Are we going back to Jim Crow? Is that what this is? ... We demand justice or there will be no peace."



Don Campbell / PMG staff

Family and friends hold a press conference Thursday at Benton Harbor City Hall to talk about Timothy Johnson, who was killed in an alleged hit and run in Silver Creek Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office. A police investigation showed Johnson, 24, of Benton Harbor, was walking on M-152, when an unknown vehicle hit him.

Jackson said she is urging police to question the woman her brother was visiting in Cass County.

"They're neglecting to look at this as a homicide," Jackson claimed.

She said the family has information it is not sharing with the sheriff's department because they don't trust them.

"I'm not going to say what I know because I'm not going to blow the case, but I know – and they know, too," Jackson said.

She said the family set up a GoFundMe account – called "Justice and Dignity for Timothy" – to perform an independent autopsy and to hire a private investigator.

Contact: lwrege@TheHP.com, 932-0361, Twitter: @HPWrege

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ELECTIONS

Baroda dissolution measure heads to ballot

Disincorporation vote to require two-thirds majority for approval

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Correspondent

Don Campbell / HP file photo

Residents are considering the possible disincorporation of the village of Baroda. The debate over the issue began last summer when petitions were first circulated calling for the dissolution of the village.

BARODA — With Baroda village and township officials at an impasse over establishing a disincorporation commission, Baroda Township officials have gone ahead and put the proposal on the Nov. 3 ballot.

The disincorporation issue first came up last year when petitions were circulated asking for the village to be dissolved or disincorporated. When time ran out on those petitions, organizers collected more signatures and submitted them Jan. 27.

Petition organizers Jim and Joanna Whitehead said earlier that they started their effort to shrink the size of local government and reduce taxes. They questioned why they were paying so much more in taxes as village residents than what they'd pay if they were in the township.

Others have questioned whether such an action would actually lower taxes for village residents and asked what the unforeseen consequences could be including taking the focus off of other critical local issues.

Village and township officials initially made plans to form a disincorporation commission to study the issue and make a recommendation to residents before it would be put on the ballot. However, the commission never met after the first scheduled meeting was canceled in March.

Since then, disagreements arose after the township failed to appoint its third member to the commission and also asked the village to remove one of their representatives on the commission.

Baroda Township board members recently voted unanimously to put the issue on the November ballot. Their action came after the Baroda Village Council voted last month to rescind their resolution to form the commission.

The failure to have a disincorporation commission meet and make a recommendation also changes who can vote on the November ballot proposal and how many votes it will take to pass.

If the proposal had been placed on the ballot as a result of the disincorporation commission recommendation, it would have required a majority vote in both the village and township to pass. As it stands now, only village residents will be voting and it will require a two-thirds vote in favor to be approved.

A secondary point of contention between the village and the township is the village's failure to take up a township proposal to hire Wightman & Associates. Wightman proposed to study how the disincorporation could affect the village infrastructure systems, who would be responsible for those systems after disincorporation and possible associated costs of disincorporation.

Wightman proposed doing the work for a $16,000 fee. While township officials signed on to have Wightman conduct the study, village officials have never brought the proposal up for a vote.

Baroda Township Clerk Christina Price said this week she was disappointed in the village's inaction. She said the Wightman study would have given a significant amount of information to voters to help them make an informed decision.

She noted the Wightman study could have also been used by the village to make future plans related to capital improvements and community development beyond any disincorporation decision.

Village officials did not return requests for comment on the Wightman issue.

Agency takes steps to protect Michigan from New World Screwworm

By PMG STAFF

LANSING — The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development today announced new domestic animal movement requirements designed to keep New World screwworm out of Michigan.

While no detections have been found in the state, confirmed infestations in Texas and New Mexico have prompted MDARD to take proactive action to safeguard against negative economic impact and protect animal health.

Effective Wednesday, June 17, the updated requirements will apply to certain warm-blooded domestic animals entering the state. The specific requirements, which can be found on MDARD's website, vary based on the NWS status of the state or region of origin.

With the announcement of new requirements, MDARD is also launching a NWS webpage dedicated to screwworm background and resources for producers, pet owners and veterinarians. The page will be updated regularly as the department monitors the ongoing threat.

"Michigan is taking decisive action to protect the health of our livestock and pets from New World screwworm," said MDARD Director Tim Boring. "These movement requirements are an important tool to keep this devastating pest out of our state. By staying vigilant, working closely with producers and veterinarians, and acting quickly when concerns arise, we can safeguard animal health and support the resilience of Michigan's agriculture sector."

"This parasitic fly poses a serious threat to the health of our livestock, pets and wildlife when cases go unnoticed, untreated and unreported," said State Veterinarian Dr. Nora Wineland, DVM, MS, DACVPM. "Producers regardless of size and pet owners need to put eyes on their animals daily to check for things like enlarging wounds or signs of irritation. NWS starts as a parasitic worm that can enter an animal through a small break in the skin or an exposed mucous membrane, so close inspection is vital to ensure suspect cases are identified, and appropriate actions are taken to treat animals and stop the spread of the pest."

The following poultry are exempt from movement requirements: Hatching and table eggs and chicks under 5 days of age; National Poultry Improvement Plan Types B, C, D, and J.

Under the new requirements, animals originating directly from an infested premises are prohibited from entering Michigan until that site is officially released from quarantine. The new restrictions also outline requirements for wound care, preventative treatment and documentation for those animals originating out of an area marked by USDA as an NWS Infested Zone or an Adjacent Surveillance Zone.

Animal owners and animal health professionals planning to import animals from states with known NWS detections are strongly encouraged to review the updated requirements and contact MDARD with any questions prior to moving animals.

Screwworm was first added to Michigan s emergency reportable disease list nearly a decade ago. The reportable disease designation requires anyone to report the disease to the State Veterinarian's Office upon suspicion, so appropriate actions can be taken. If you suspect an animal is infected with screwworm, please contact MDARD immediately at (800) 292-3939 during the day or (517) 373-0440 after-hours.

Additional information, including resources for producers and veterinarians, is available on MDARD's new NWS information page. For national updates on NWS outbreaks in Texas and New Mexico, visit USDA's dedicated NWS webpage.

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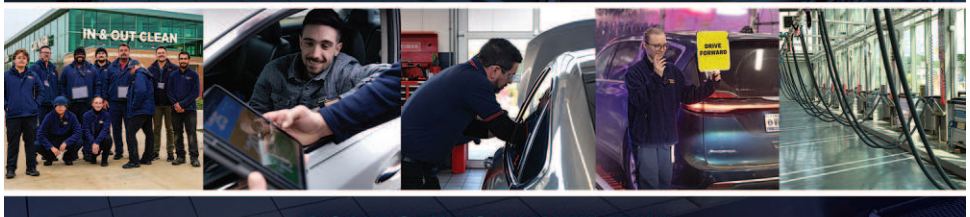

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Underground Railroad Days set for July 11-12

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

VANDALIA — The Underground Railroad Society of Cass County MI and the Village of Vandalia will partner for the annual Underground Railroad Days from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 11, and Sunday, July 12.

Festivities will be centered in the Village of Vandalia, as well as four nearby Underground Railroad stations.

Underground Railroad Days celebrates the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Cass County, particularly the area around Vandalia – Calvin, Porter and Penn Townships – known as "Young's Prairie" at the time. The UGRR existed in this area from 1830 to 1860 and it is estimated about 1,500 fugitive slaves passed through this area on their way to Canada. Many stayed for a time and worked on Quaker farms. They were targets of the infamous 1847 Kentucky Slave Raid.

The two-day event will feature guided tours of Kentucky Raid sites, a living history encampment of the Civil War 102nd U.S. Colored Troops, and all day entertainment at the Ramptown Cabin in Milo Barnes Park.

Four historic sites related to the Underground Railroad will be open for tours: The Victorian James E. Bonine House, 18970 M-60, home of Quaker abolitionists James E. and Sarah Bogue Bonine, and the Bonine Carriage House across the street where fugitive slaves were sheltered; the Stephen and Hannah Bogue House, 20283 M-60 and Brownsville School No. 1, 20559 Osborn St.

Historic music will be played at the Bonine House to immerse guests into the time period. In addition to the tours and historic sites, vendors, food trucks and family activities will be located on the village grounds.

Parking and all events are free. Additional information on the URSCC's work, as well as information on donating to their efforts, can be found at urscc.org and friendsofbrownsvilleschool.org.

CIDER

From page A1

meaningful bridge between research and the next generation of beverage professionals," said Mike de Schaaf, Farm Manager, Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center.

Students applied fermentation principles to create a cider style of their own. They made independent decisions, choosing fermentation techniques intended to deliver specific sensory outcomes. Some used stainless steel fermentations to preserve bright apple character and freshness, while others aged cider in barrels to develop additional texture and complexity. Grand Lac ultimately became a blend of these approaches.

Students then traveled to Fenn Valley Vineyards in Fennville, where they worked alongside the winery team to learn about beverage canning while packaging the cider on the winery's canning line.

"The beverage industry benefits when we create opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience. We were happy to partner on Grand Lac and give students a chance to experience canning and production in a commercial setting," said Fenn Valley Vineyards Winemaker Matt Jannette.

Grand Lac Cider is available to enjoy onsite or for to-go purchase at the Lake Michigan Vintners tasting room on Lake Michigan College's Benton Harbor campus. The tasting room is located at 2744 E. Empire Ave. Its hours are Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 6 p.m.

Guests can also explore new beverage experiences offered this summer, including barrel tastings, wine and cheese pairings, and educational guided tastings with LMC staff and educators. More information and reservations are available at www.lakemichiganvintners.com.

Lake Michigan Vintners is the teaching winery of Lake Michigan College and serves as a commercial learning environment for students in the Wine and Viticulture Technology program. Students gain hands-on experience in vineyard management, winemaking, sensory evaluation, production, packaging, and hospitality while creating wines and beverages that reflect Southwest Michigan agriculture and craftsmanship.

Lake Michigan College operates the only teaching winery in the Midwest. The LMC Viticulture program connects career seekers, hobbyists and lifelong learners with industry professionals to explore and learn the finer points of creating wines, from vine to glass. In just 18-24 months, students get hands-on, real-world experience with every facet of the wine industry as they work toward their associate degree.

More information about the program is available at lakemichigancollege.edu/academics/culinary-wine viticulture/wine-and-viticulture.

Photo provided

Lake Michigan Vintners, the working enterprise and commercial arm of the College's Wine and Viticulture Technology program, has announced the release of Grand Lac Cider.

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Sports

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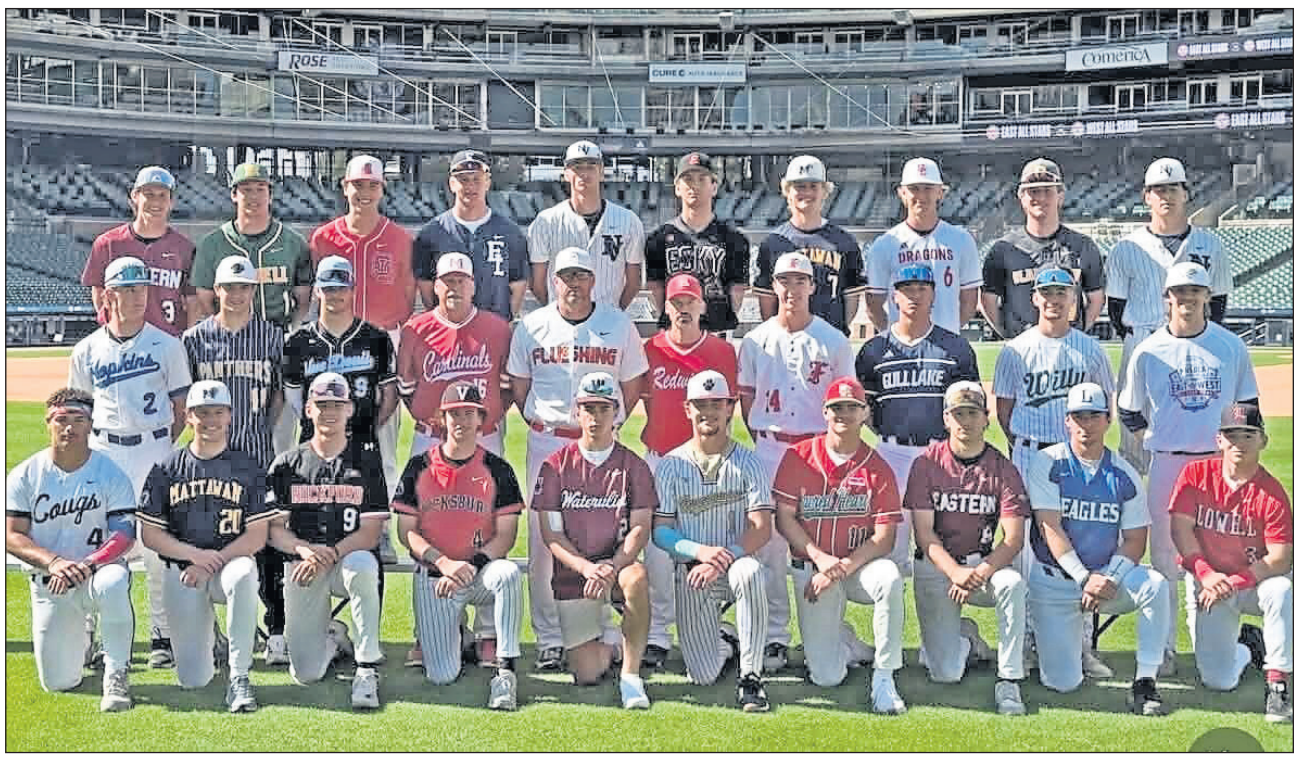
Locals named to baseball All-Star game



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Brenden Olsen (third row, fifth from left) and Jaxen Racht (third row, farthest right) represented Niles High School and Ryder Richard (first row, sixth from left) represented Brandywine at the 45th annual MHSBCA East-West All-Star Baseball Classic.

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DETROIT — The Niles area sent three players to compete in the MHSBCA East-West All-Star Game Monday at Comerica Park in Detroit.

Brenden Olsen and Jaxen Racht represented Niles High School and Ω Ryder Richard represented Brandywine at the 45th annual MHSBCA East-West All-Star Baseball Classic.

The annual event featured some of the top senior baseball players from across Michigan and gave them one final opportunity to represent their high schools. Olsen and Racht were named to Division 2 all-state teams and Olsen to the MHSBCA Dream Team. Richard was named Division 3 all-state.

Splitter takes over as Bulls coach and promises team will compete every night

By JAY COHEN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Growing up in Brazil, Tiago Splitter used to watch Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls in the middle of the night.

"Hidden from my parents and at 1 a.m., watching M.J. games and rooting for the Bulls," Splitter said with a wry grin.

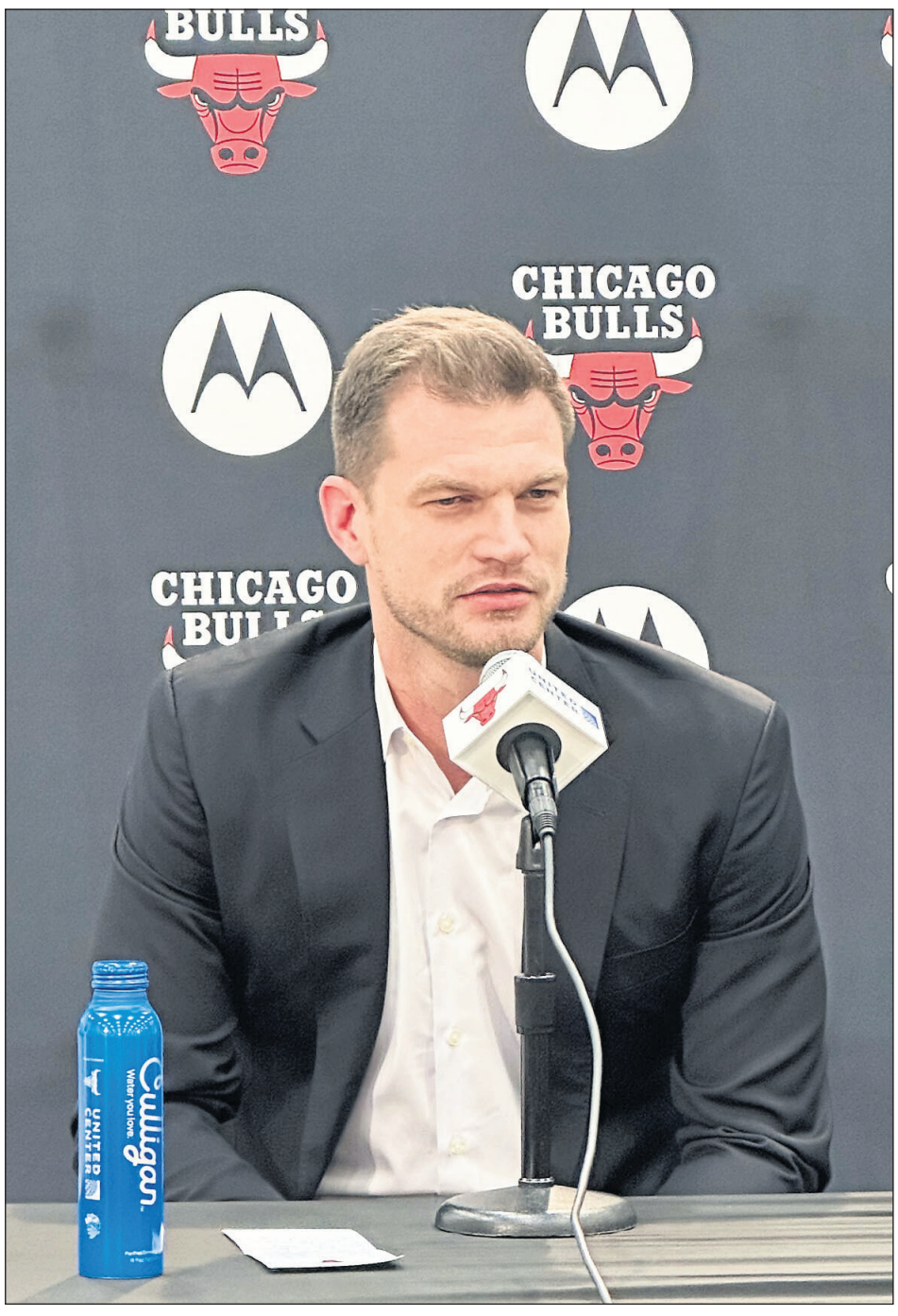
That was the most successful period in franchise history. Now the Bulls are hoping to start another winning era with Splitter on the sideline.

The 41-year-old Splitter was formally introduced on Wednesday as the 25th coach in franchise history. He brings a wealth of experience that includes seven years in the NBA as a player and a challenging season as the interim coach of the Portland Trail Blazers.

The addition of Splitter is the team's most significant move since Bryson Graham took over as executive vice president of basketball operations on May 4. The 6-foot-11 Splitter emerged from a crowded field of candidates that reportedly included Minnesota Timberwolves assistant Micah Nori, Atlanta Hawks assistant Ryan Schmidt and Wes Unseld Jr., who was on Chicago's coaching staff last season.

While describing why Splitter was the choice, Graham praised the coach's competitiveness and his ability to connect with players.

See **SPLITTER**, page B2



Jordan Cohen / AP

Chicago Bulls coach Tiago Splitter talks at his introductory press conference on June 17 in Chicago.

Cassopolis, Dowagiac athletes earn honors in the spring sports

PMG STAFF

The spring sports season is in the books and several Cassopolis and Dowagiac players earned postseason accolades.

Baseball

Cassopolis

Waylon Yakel – Honorable Mention All-SW10
Lane Leach – Honorable Mention All-SW10
Aiden Voorhees – First Team All-Lakeland
Cole Wimberly – First Team All-Lakeland

Softball

Cassopolis

Madalynn Yakel – First team All-SW10
Ella Smego – Second Team All-SW10
Tori Burks – Honorable Mention All-SW10
Sienna Young – Honorable Mention All-SW10

Dowagiac

Team Academic All-State

Marlie Carpenter – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District, Ind. Academic All-State, Team MVP
Bree Behnke – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District, Ind. Academic All-State, All-Region
Charleigh Reed – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District
Emily Henry – First Team All-Lakeland
Olivia McIntosh – First Team All-Lakeland
Bree Campbell – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District
Claire Hess – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, All-District, All-Region
Lilian Bladecki Cobb – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Addison Wilson – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, Ind. Academic All-State

Boys golf

Cassopolis

Alan Wegner – First Team All-SW10
Dickson Samadder – First Team All-SW10
William Westrate – First Team All-SW10
Turner Westrate – First Team All-SW10
Jaii Vanhphoumy – Second Team All-SW10

Dowagiac

Jeremiah Bond – First Team All-Lakeland, Team MVP

Track and Field

Cassopolis

Aerenn Buck-Hooper – First Team All-SW10
Jaylen Pratt – First Team All-SW10
Nikolas Craig – Second Team All-SW10
Cameron Steward – Second Team All-SW10
Ella Carlisle – Second Team All-SW10
Madison Nelson – Second Team All-SW10
Maya Walker – Second Team All-SW10
Riley Jones – Honorable Mention All-SW10
AlayJah Beck – Honorable Mention All-SW10

Dowagiac

Ethan Nearpass – First Team All-Lakeland, State qualifier
Quentin Hill – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Jaden Hull – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Devin Maddron – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Aaron Morgan – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Devin Rock – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
DJ Shivers – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Marcus Wares – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Isaiah Weatherspoon – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, Team MVP
Jeremiah Hargreaves – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Angel Brito – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Axel Santiago Ramirez – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Balois Franco – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Shamyra Clark – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, State qualifier
Jocelyn Kiner – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Khamari Mack – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, State qualifier
Nadia Poorman – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, State qualifier
Ella Richter – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, State qualifier

Girls soccer

Dowagiac

Johannah McDonald – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District, Team MVP
Riley O'Konski – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District, Team MVP
Chloe Brewer – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District
Airreana Morse – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District
Jimena Sanchez Ortega – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District
Sabina Sanchez Ortega – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, HM All-District
Maya Hernandez – First Team All-Lakeland, All-District
Alivia Bell – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, HM All-District
Valentina Mireles – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Lucy Hughes – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Jaeleah Schoff – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Chloe Friske – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland, HM All-District

Girls Tennis

Kai Kruger – First Team All-Lakeland
Kendall Kroepel – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland
Makyah West – Honorable Mention All-Lakeland

Izzo furious as Michigan State blows another chance to get it right

By BOB WOJNOWSKI
The Detroit News (TNS)

The president is leaving, the athletic director is leaving, the football coach has barely been around long enough to get his name on a parking spot. And understandably, the basketball coach is furious.

Of course Tom Izzo is much more than Michigan State's basketball coach. He's the face of the school, the emotional touchstone. He's been there 31 years as head coach, fully vested to speak for the university and from the heart.

He must wonder sometimes if anyone listens.

A.D. J Batt, who arrived last June as a celebrated hire from Georgia Tech, is bolting for Kentucky. President Kevin Guskiewicz, who arrived two-plus years ago from North Carolina, recently accepted the same position at Clemson. Guskiewicz and Batt were ambitious and connected, eager to lead MSU through the treacherous landscape of college athletics, and just as they geared up, they felt pushed away.

When Pat Fitzgerald was introduced as the new football coach last December, the excited talk was about "alignment" across the university, from top to bottom. Barely six months later, the offices are empty again and MSU is stuck with a confusing disaster.

See **IZZO**, page B2

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IZZO

From page B1

"I've had it," Izzo told reporters Monday. "This is self-inflicted. We just lost the best president that may have ever been here, one of the best. And there are other dominoes that get affected when things go wrong like that. I'm very upset about it. And I'm sick of it."

Many Spartans presumably are sick of it, from alums to students to the Hall of Fame coach who's 71, and contrary to his abundant energy, won't be around forever. Mostly, people are disgusted by the infighting, petty politics and lack of a clear, shared vision. Much of the ire is directed at the Board of Trustees, the eight-member panel entrusted with protecting MSU's interests. Governing boards at universities are important oversight tools, but MSU has historically been rife with disagreement.

Guskiewicz cited Board dysfunction as a primary reason for his departure, even spurning an offer to double his salary to stay. In his resignation letter, he blasted away, calling his relationship with the Board of Trustees an "unsustainable situation." He pointedly wrote, "What is perhaps most troubling is the actions of some to abuse their access to privileged and confidential information to misrepresent facts, manipulate situations and selectively use and leak that information to promote personal agendas."

As outsiders, it didn't take Guskiewicz and Batt long to recognize the size of the challenge. Batt launched Spartan Ventures to raise NIL funds for athletes, and almost immediately, its for-profit arm, Spartan Media Ventures, raised questions about third-party stakes in a public university. You can debate whether it's good or bad, but the debate itself is important. Except that it devolved into rabid public arguments about transparency and oversight.

To quell the airing of grievances and leaking of sensitive information, the Board majority approved "revised ethics and conduct standards" and required each Trustee to sign it. Failure to do so could result in public censure or removal. Three trustees – Rema Vassar (D-Detroit), Dennis Denno (D-East Lansing) and Mike Balow (R-Plymouth) – refused, citing freedom of speech and commitment to their duties, before it was approved.

MSU is not the only university to struggle with alignment, as UM has had its own notable disagreements between the president and Board of Regents. Michigan is looking for its fourth president in four years, after Santa Ono departed and president-elect Kent Syverud stepped down because of a cancer diagnosis.

MSU is seeking its seventh president in eight years (counting interims), going back to the 2018 resignation of Lou Anna Simon in the midst of the Larry Nassar sexual assault scandal. That also cost AD Mark Hollis his job, and Hollis said Monday he'd be interested if MSU wanted him back. Finding another AD that fits could be problematic without a permanent president. And finding a permanent president could be problematic considering the power of the Board, which ousted president Samuel Stanley Jr. in 2022.

Daniel Mears / The Detroit News / TNS

Michigan State men's basketball coach Tom Izzo called the departures of president Kevin Guskiewicz and athletic director J Batt "self-inflicted."

Like many schools, MSU can be an insular place, a bit of an echo chamber, reluctant to change. That's why it was encouraging when Guskiewicz and Batt barreled in with provocative ideas and fundraising plans, including the securing of a $401-million commitment from donors Greg and Dawn Williams.

That's why it's so discouraging the regime collapsed, necessitating two more delicate hirings. It's not easy to find innovative leaders who also grasp MSU's history and unique challenges. The Spartans' fundraising has been haphazard, going back to Mel Tucker's $95-million contract, partly funded by billionaire alum Mat Ishbia. In that case, differing opinions created dissent, Tucker turned out to be a disaster, and AD Alan Haller ultimately lost his job. It was the type of mistake the new regime was attempting to avoid.

Latest upheavel embarrassing

Izzo called the latest upheaval embarrassing, and it is, especially because much of it is self-inflicted. It doesn't have to be ingrained in the school, even if seems that way. Not long ago, MSU's athletic leaders – Hollis, Izzo, Mark Dantonio – were as successful and powerful as any trio in the country. Because of the monstrous scope of the Nassar tragedy, more people at MSU were impacted than should have been. Leaders were forced out or scattered, except for one.

Izzo, who had nothing to do with Nassar, stood up for his school, loudly and passionately. Every time you wonder if it will break him, he fires back. Just like every time you wonder if he'll keep the Spartans successful, he wins a Big Ten title.

"Still standing, still winning," Izzo said Monday at the announcement of a $40-million sponsorship with MSUFCU (credit union) for jersey patches. "You know, I love my football coach and my hockey coach, those were the first two guys to call me last week. Their words were 'Let's go.' … Because we've been divided, and I don't think it's a 50-50 divide or 60-40 or 80-20, you know? It's a couple people look at things one way, and a lot of people look at it the other way. But it'll be a cold day in hell before I don't think this is still one of the great universities in the country. Why don't we get out of our own way? I don't know."

Izzo is always up for a good fight – with the NCAA, the media, the officials, the NIL mayhem, his rival. The truth is, he doesn't always pick the right battles, and that's where the East Lansing echo chamber hampers him. Much of the fighting is Spartan-on-Spartan, whether among trustees or donors or whoever's picking the next football coach.

"I think 600,000 alums better start rallying together," Izzo said. "I'm gonna ask the alums to stand up because what happened with our president is ridiculous. And he said it, we know the reasons, and I'm ashamed. I'm disgusted, hurt. But we'll see what the Spartan Nation thinks. … I think Michigan State people have to take ownership of their university. We gotta speak up. We gotta band together."

Izzo was speaking to a broad base, but pointedly to the Trustees and other factions that get accused of putting their own interests above the school. It's about how money is spent, how NIL funds are distributed and which programs pay the price, such as the school's disbanded swimming program. To be fair, the trustees supported many of Guskiewicz's moves, including swift approval of the Batt and Fitzgerald hirings, as well as the ouster of football coach Jonathan Smith.

Guskiewicz gave Batt a mandate to modernize and monetize MSU athletics, and that's his strength. He pushed hard and so did the president, and in some ways the pushback was predictable.

"I can't stand what's going on," said Izzo, whose voice is strong and respected, but it's only one voice. Fans and alums may want to fight back but they don't know where to swing and what to hit. The Board of Trustees is the obvious target, and often the right target, but there's blame to go around. Michigan State is a large, renowned institution with a rich history. Too often, it doesn't act like it.

Bob Wojnowski is a columnist for The Detroit News.

Bobcat baseball quartet earns all-state honors

PMG STAFF

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — The Brandywine baseball team is well-represented when it comes to postseason honors.

Four Bobcats – Hudson Aalfs, Ryder Richard, Kaeden Warfield and Kyler Marshall were named to Division 3 all-state teams. Aalfs and Richard were named to all-state teams at utility and catcher respectively while Warfield and Marshall earned honorable mention recognition at outfielder and pitchers respectively.

The four Bobcats helped the Bobcats earn a Lakeland Conference title as well as the team's first district title since 2008.

SPLITTER

From page B1

"We are at the ground floor," Graham said. "And so when you have someone that has a vision that aligns with yours, that knows how you want to play, and how to build a program, we just, I mean, we couldn't be more excited."

Splitter joined Chauncey Billups' staff in Portland last June. He was elevated from assistant to interim coach when Billups was arrested in October in a federal takedown of a sprawling gambling operation. Billups has pleaded not guilty to charges of wire fraud and money laundering.

Splitter coached Portland to a 42-40 record and a five-game loss to San Antonio in the first round of the playoffs. It was the first playoff appearance and first time the Trail Blazers finished with a winning record since the 2020-21 season.

"It wasn't an easy situation," Splitter said. "I think, you know, as the season went to the finish, to the end, we almost forgot about it and that was the great thing. ... That was most important thing for me, just like leaving the outside noise out of the picture and focusing on basketball and by the end, you're having like a clear goal and finish the way we finished."

Splitter declined to discuss his departure from Portland.

"I think there's too many things being said already and I think that's enough," he said. "I'm past that and I want to think about the Chicago Bulls."

Splitter spent time with San Antonio, Atlanta and Philadelphia during his playing career. He was selected by the Spurs in the first round of the 2007 draft, and he helped the team win an NBA title in 2014.

He worked for Brooklyn for five seasons from 2018-23, first as a pro scout and then as an assistant coach. He was an assistant for Houston for one year before coaching Paris Basketball Club to a French Cup championship during the 2024-25 season.

That experience – both playing and coaching – was an appealing attribute, Graham said.

"He's got a phenomenal story," he said.

Splitter is replacing Billy Donovan, who resigned after six seasons. The Bulls had conversations with Donovan about returning, but he decided to step aside rather than work with a new front office.

Chicago allowed 121.5 points per game this season, ranking 28th overall in the NBA. It finished with a 31-51 record while missing the playoffs for the fourth straight year.

The Bulls pick No. 4 and No. 15 in next week's draft, and they also have plenty of salary-cap space going into free agency. But Splitter offered a diplomatic answer when asked about expectations for next season.

"I can guarantee you one thing: We're going to compete every night," he said. "And we're going to have high standards with everything that we do."

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Rangel uses 'pure reaction' to make save for Mexico

Fernando Llano / AP

Mexico goalkeeper Raul Rangel (1) makes a save on the goal line during the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Korea in Zapopan, near Guadalajara, Mexico on Thursday.

By TALES AZZONI
Associated Press

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — With Mexico a few minutes away from securing a spot in the knockout stage of the World Cup it's hosting with the U.S. and Canada, goalkeeper Raúl "Tala" Rangel extended his right arm and positioned his hand perfectly to keep the ball from crossing the line, denying South Korea an equalizer.

The 87th-minute save by the goalkeeper, who is from the Guadalajara region and plays for local club Chivas, sealed a 1-0 win and a first-place finish for Mexico in Group A. El Tri became the first team to advance from the group stage.

"It was very quick, it was pure reaction," Rangel said. "I couldn't really tell you what I saw, because I remember the moment of impact with my teammate and me having the ball. But I think I was really focused, I came through when team needed me, and I'm happy about that."

The 26-year-old Rangel came up big twice in the decisive play.

He stopped Yang Hyun-jun's attempt with his extended arm immediately after he saved a close-range header by Cho Gue-sung. The ball ricocheted up as Rangel collided with a teammate going to the ground, but he was able to block Yang's strike on the rebound.

Rangel got the starting role for the World Cup after an injury earlier this year to Luis Ángel Malagón, Mexico's expected starter in goal.

Coach Javier Aguirre said he felt confident about having Rangel in goal at the World Cup.

"He showed me a lot of determination ever since we called him up for the first time," Aguirre said. "He played very well for his team this season."

Rangel's Chivas plays at Estadio Akron, Guadalajara's World Cup host venue. Luis Romo, who scored Mexico's goal on Thursday, also plays for the club that traditionally only fields players from Mexico.

"Tala is at home, he is happy," Aguirre said. "And I'm happy for him."

Hydration breaks have sparked criticism but what do they do?

By DORANY PINEDA and JENNIFER McDERMOTT
Associated Press

Julio Cortez / AP

England's Harry Kane (9) cools off during a hydration break of the World Cup Group L soccer match between England and Croatia in Arlington, Texas, on Wednesday.

LOS ANGELES — For the first time in World Cup history, FIFA is mandating all soccer players take hydration breaks to protect them from the threats of extreme heat. But the new rule has sparked criticism from different groups.

Some experts have warned that this summer's World Cup – co-hosted by the U.S., Mexico and Canada – could be the hottest in the tournament's history. In response to concerns about extreme heat, FIFA implemented three-minute hydration breaks midway through each half regardless of temperatures or whether stadiums are enclosed or air conditioned. But some critics say they're interrupting the game's flow and give coaches a chance to shift momentum in their team's favor, while some scientists have said the breaks are too short to make a significant impact on cooling and rehydration when conditions are sizzling.

"When we look at the three-minute hydration breaks, we're really looking at this as a way to mitigate anything that could potentially lead to an incident or an emergency," said Joshua L. DeVincenzo with Columbia University's National Center for Disaster Preparedness.

FIFA's mandatory breaks, regardless of temperatures

FIFA said the mandatory breaks are to "ensure equal conditions for all teams, in all matches," and the rules draw upon the experiences of past tournaments, including the FIFA Club World Cup in the U.S. last summer when temperatures soared.

Some coaches said the breaks make sense when temperatures are extreme, but they questioned whether they were necessary at every match. The pauses have also been criticized for interrupting the spectacle for fans, with broadcasters cutting to commercials.

Mexico coach Javier Aguirre said they're making the most of the hydration breaks.

"You can't get on the field but the players can come near you while drinking water and we can give them instructions," he said. "We take advantage to try to correct something during the game, it's something good for the coaches."

Even highly-trained, elite athletes can get heat stress

Athletes pushing themselves physically in hot and humid conditions risk getting what's called exertional heat illness. It happens when the body gets too hot and is accompanied by significant strain on the heart, nerves, muscles and central nervous systems.

Symptoms include muscle cramps, extreme fatigue, impaired performance, headache, irritability, nausea, dizziness, cramping and dehydration.

When internal body temperature exceeds 105 F, athletes might feel confused, aggressive or lose consciousness, said Yuri Hosokawa with the Faculty of Sport Sciences in Japan's Waseda University, in an email, "all of which are characteristic signs of exertional heat stroke and require immediate medical attention." She co-signed a letter to FIFA in May urging stricter heat guidelines for player safety, including that cooling breaks be at least six minutes.

Exertional heat stroke is among the leading causes of death in athletes.

Dehydration also exacerbates the risk. Athletes in the heat can sweat 50 to 67 ounces an hour, and most drink less liquids than they expel. Losing as little as 2 percent of one's body weight to dehydration can impair physical performance.

Ryan Calsbeek, professor of biological sciences at Dartmouth College, said the human body performs better when it's warmer, but there's a critical threshold above which that improvement in performance not only stops, but precipitously drops off.

"Your body starts to really fall apart, you lose the ability to cool off fast enough," he said. "And the physiological mechanisms just break down." That happens when the wet bulb globe temperature, which includes temperature, humidity, cloud cover and wind, reads above about 95 F, though some people will be more heat tolerant.

The increased confusion from extreme heat could impact an athlete's ability to make strategic decisions, he said.

"It's these marginal differences in performance that I think can determine the outcome of a match," Calsbeek said. "If you have individuals that do better in extreme conditions, whether it's extreme heat or high altitude or whatever the case may be, those small differences could play a critical, pivotal role in determining the outcome."

Hydration breaks should be longer, some experts say

The three-minute mandatory hydration breaks are meant to protect players, and referees, from extreme heat illness and help them maintain their physical performance.

Players can cool off and replenish lost water and salt from sweating.

That could mean putting wet, cold towels on parts of a player's body. If done well, that could reduce their body temperature by about 0.22 F per minute, said Douglas Casa, CEO of the University of Connecticut's Korey Stringer Institute who also co-signed the letter.

"Some people can tolerate a little more fluids comfortably and then do intense exercise. Some people can't because it sloshes around in their stomach and they don't feel super comfortable, so they might not drink as much in such a short period of time," he added.

In a 2024 study, researchers found that three minutes lowered athletes' core temperature by about 0.72 F during simulated soccer running in a heat chamber. But this happened in ideal conditions where they drank 350 to 400 milliliters of cold water and draped a cold towel on their shoulders.

Draping ice towels over a player's shoulders can be helpful, but only if they rehydrate as well, said Julien Périard in an email, a study co-author and director of the University of Canberra Research Institute for Sport and Exercise who also signed the letter.

That's why it's important the three minutes be well planned, but "even in ideal settings, the breaks can slightly help but will not eliminate the risk of heat illness in response to a rise in core temperature," he said.

Casa said time dictates the volume of impact, whether from fluid or cooling.

How much time a player needs to recover also varies. "Depending on your body, you might need more or less time. But those kinds of breaks are crucial so that your body isn't just being forced to keep trying to play catch up... to keep trying to cool you down without any kind of rest or a break," said Bharat Venkat, director of the Heat Lab at the University of California, Los Angeles.

As our planet gets hotter, mandating hydration breaks and changing where, when and how sports are played will be necessary.

"No matter what sport you play, there's going to be adjustments that have to be made in the face of climate change, " he said.

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TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PENN, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a regular meeting of the Penn Township Planning Commission will be held on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Penn Township Hall located at 60717 S. Main St., Vandalia, MI 49095, Cass County, Michigan. Call (269)476-2173 with any questions.

Purpose of Meeting:
* Consider Conditional Use Permit for Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District regarding 16 acres on Geneva Street.
* Discuss changing the minimum split on a 40-acre parcel zoned Agriculture from 2 acres to 1 acre. (Farmland preservation)
* Address allowing swimming pools to be constructed on the water side of waterfront properties

Public Welcome
Members of the public will be able to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting, and such comments will be limited to two minutes per person. Written comments will be received concerning the above matters via first-class mail to the Penn Township Clerk.

This notice is posted in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended, the Open Meetings Act, MCL 41.72a, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Penn Township Board will provide necessary reasonable aids and services, such as signers for the hearing-impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon five (5) days' notice to the Penn Township Board by writing or calling the Penn Township Clerk.

Penn Township Planning Commission,
By: Carl Sparks, Chairperson

Penn Township Clerk,
Rhonda Barnett
Address: PO Box 69,
Vandalia, MI 49095
Email: Penn_Clerk@outlook.com
Phone: (269) 816-516

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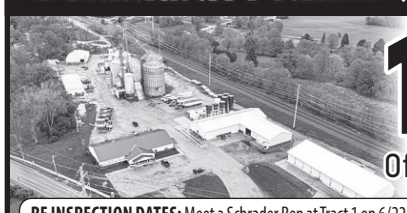

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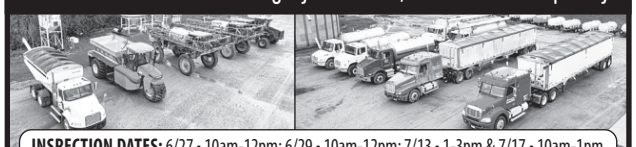

INSPECTION DATES: 6/27 • 10am-12pm; 6/29 • 10am-12pm; 7/13 • 1-3pm & 7/17 • 10am-1pm

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NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT

Default having been made in the conditions of a certain Mortgage made by MALINDA L. SPEICHER, a single woman, residing at 368 East Main Street, Marcellus, MI 49067 to OAK MORTGAGE, LLC. (n/k/a STURGIS BANK & TRUST COMPANY), 125 E. Chicago Road, Sturgis, Michigan 49091 dated August 6, 2021, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on August 18, 2021, in Liber 1201 of Mortgages, on page 1648. There is claimed to be due on the date of this notice, for principal and interest the sum of One Hundred Sixteen Thousand Sixty-Seven and 23/100 ($116,267.23) Dollars due on the mortgage and no proceedings having been instituted to recover the debt now remaining secured by said Mortgage, or any part thereof, whereby the power of sale contained in said Mortgage has become operative;

Now Therefore, Notice is Given that by virtue of the power of sale contained in said Mortgages and under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, the said Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises therein described or so much thereof as may be necessary, at a public auction sale, to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check, at the West outer door of the Courthouse in the City of Cassopolis and County of Cass, Michigan, that being the place of holding Circuit Court in and for said County, on July 15, 2026, at promptly 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon of said day; which said mortgage premises are described as follows, to-wit: Lot 3, Block 1 South, Range 3 East, Village of Marcellus, according to the recorded plat in Liber 41 of Plats, Page 138, Cass County Records.

Property Address: 368 East Main Street, Marcellus, MI 49067 PIN: 14-051-551-003-00

Said premises will be sold to pay the amount as aforesaid then due on said Mortgage together with 2.875% percent interest on the Mortgage, legal costs, attorneys' fees and also any taxes and insurance that said Mortgagee does pay on or prior to the date of said sale. The amount due on said Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.

Pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the last day to redeem the Sheriff's Deed will be January 15, 2027, however, if an Affidavit of Abandonment is filed with the Register of Deeds, the last day to redeem will be August 15, 2026, or until the time to provide the notice was required by MCL 600.3241a(c) expires, whichever is later.

If said property is in fact sold at the above-described foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the above listed Mortgagor will be responsible to the person who buys the property at the foreclosure sale or to STURGIS BANK & TRUST COMPANY for damaging the property during the redemption period.

ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this Notice.

ATTENTION PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest.

Dated: June 20, 2026

STURGIS BANK & TRUST
Mortgagee.

HaasCaywood PC
By: P. Joseph Haas, Jr.
Attorney for STURGIS BANK & TRUST
Business Address: 112 South Monroe Street
Sturgis, MI 49091
(269) 651-3281

SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ADOPTION/SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the following is a summary of ordinance numbered 2026-01 imposing a temporary moratorium on the consideration of applications for data centers in the township which was adopted by the Silver Creek Township Board at a regular meeting on June 10, 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01

SECTION 1. FINDINGS. The Township Board wishes to undertake further study to consider the impacts of data centers; and to permit the planning commission to undertake consideration of such use as it relates to zoning and land use in the township.

SECTION 2. MORATORIUM/TERM OF MORATORIUM. A 12-month moratorium is enacted to temporarily eliminate acceptance or processing of applications for data centers in the Township.

SECTION 3. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM. The Township can extend the moratorium by resolution before it expires in order to provide sufficient time consideration of such use in the township and potential ordinance amendments therefore.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY. The various provisions of the Ordinance are severable from each other.

SECTION 5. REPEAL. Conflicting ordinances and ordinance provisions are repealed.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. The Ordinance is effective upon publication of this summary.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the full text of the Ordinance has been posted at the Silver Creek Township Hall, on the township's website at www.silvercreektwpmi.gov and that copies of the Ordinance may be obtained or inspected at the office of the Silver Creek Township Clerk at the address set forth below during regular business hours of regular working days following the date of this publication. The Township may be contacted at (269) 424-3025.

Jess Honn, Clerk
silvercreektwpmi@gmail.com
Silver Creek Township
32764 Dixon St.
Dowagiac, MI 49047
269-424-3025
www.SilverCreektownship.org

CALVIN TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ADOPTION/SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF CALVIN TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the following is a summary of ordinance numbered 2026-06 imposing a temporary moratorium on the consideration of applications for data centers in the township which was adopted by the Calvin Township Board at a regular meeting on June 9, 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-06

SECTION 1. FINDINGS. The Township Board wishes to undertake further study to consider the impacts of data centers; and to permit the planning commission to undertake consideration of such use as it relates to zoning and land use in the township.

SECTION 2. MORATORIUM/TERM OF MORATORIUM. A 12-month moratorium is enacted to temporarily eliminate acceptance or processing of applications for data centers in the Township.

SECTION 3. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM. The Township can extend the moratorium by resolution before it expires in order to provide sufficient time consideration of such use in the township and potential ordinance amendments therefore.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY. The various provisions of the Ordinance are severable from each other.

SECTION 5. REPEAL. Conflicting ordinances and ordinance provisions are repealed.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. The Ordinance is effective upon publication of this summary.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the full text of the Ordinance has been posted at the Calvin Township Hall, on the township's website at www.calvintownship.org; and that copies of the Ordinance may be obtained or inspected at the office of the Calvin Township Clerk at the address set forth below during regular business hours of regular working days following the date of this publication. The Township may be contacted at (269) 476-2620.

Michelle Anderson, Clerk
calvintwpmi@gmail.com
Calvin Township
18693 Mt. Zion Road
Cassopolis, MI 49031
269-476-2620
www.calvintownship.org

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in CASS County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 22, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Jamal B. Smith, whose address is 33602 Sassafras Lane, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, being a mortgage dated October 20, 2023, and recorded on November 2, 2023 in Liber 1239 Page 389, Cass County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to SAIF Securitization Trust 2024-CES1, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated June 1, 2026 and recorded on June 8, 2026 in Liber 1277 Page 1443, Cass County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of FORTY THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE AND 69/100 DOLLARS ($40,461.69). Said premises are situated in the Township of Silver Creek, County of Cass, State of Michigan, and are described as: Unit 19 in Indian Lake Woods Condominium, according to the Master Deed thereof, as recorded in Liber 847, Page 137, Cass County Records, and any amendments thereto and designated as Cass County Condominium Subdivision Plan No. 12, together with rights in general common elements and limited common elements as set forth in said Master Deed and as described in Act 59 of the Public Acts of 1978, as amended. Street Address: 33602 Sassafras Lane, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: June 20, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490) Johnson, Blumberg & Associates LLC 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602 312.541.9710 - Phone 312.541.9711 - Fax File No.: MI 26 7212 (06-20)(07-11)

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June 26th, 8a-4p &
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Sale includes holiday decor, tools, household items, baby bed, stroller, toys, children and adult clothing. Proceeds support local residents in need.
57205 Sink Rd, Dowagiac.

0200 EMPLOYMENT

WANTED
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Contact Mike
at 269-362-1566

0500 MERCHANDISE

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0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF BERRIEN

PUBLICATION OF CREDITORS NOTICE

FILE NO.
2026-0304-DE-M

ESTATE OF: Kenneth R. Reed
Date of Birth: 09/09/1949

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The Decedent, Kenneth R. Reed, who lived at 5250 Terminal Road, Niles, Michigan, died February 19, 2026.
Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Jeremy Reed, c/o PO Box 1310, Niles, Michigan 49120, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 811 Port Street, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date June 15, 2026

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Attorney
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269)683-8300

Jeremy Reed
Petitioner
c/o PO Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF BERRIEN

PUBLICATION OF CREDITORS NOTICE

FILE NO.
2026-0464-DE-J

ESTATE OF: Nicholas Aaron Ahlgrim
Date of Birth: 01/31/2002

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The Decedent, Nicholas Aaron Ahlgrim, who lived at 1353 Sheffield Avenue, Niles, Michigan, died April 10, 2026.
Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Shari Jo Ahlgrim, c/o PO Box 1310, Niles, Michigan 49120, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 811 Port Street, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date June 20, 2026

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Attorney
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269)683-8300

Shari Jo Ahlgrim
Petitioner
c/o PO Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120

DOWAGIAC UNION SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on June 29, 2026, at 6:00 o'clock p.m., at the City Hall, Dowagiac, Michigan, the Board of Education of Dowagiac Union Schools will hold a public hearing to consider the District's proposed 2026-2027 budget.

The Board may not adopt its proposed 2026-2027 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate is available for public inspection during normal business hours at 243 S. Front Street, Dowagiac, Michigan.

***The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.**

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Randi Taggart, Secretary

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF CASS

PUBLICATION OF CREDITORS NOTICE

FILE NO.
2026-134-DE

ESTATE OF: WILLIAM JAMES SWARTZ
Date of Birth: October 10, 1944

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The Decedent, William James Swartz, who lived at 62194 Anderson Road, Niles, Michigan, died March 31, 2026.
Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Christopher Swartz, c/o PO Box 1310, Niles, Michigan 49120, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date June 15, 2026

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Attorney
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269)683-8300

Christopher Swartz
Petitioner
c/o PO Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Cass

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-145-DE
Hon. Carol M. Bealor

Estate of: Robert Alphonse DeSchepper III
Date of birth: 05/06/1990

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Robert Alphonse DeSchepper III died 04/05/2026.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Robert Alphonse DeSchepper Jr., personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 06/16/2026

Heidi Duncan P76168
Attorney name **Bar no.**
107 Pennsylvania Ave
Address
Dowagiac, MI 49047
City, State, Zip
269-782-9895
Telephone no.

Robert Alphonse DeSchepper Jr.
Personal representative
23482 Redfield St
Address
Edwardsburg, MI 49112
City, state, zip

BUCHANAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on June 29, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., the Board of Education of Buchanan Community Schools will hold a public hearing to consider the District's proposed 2026-2027 budget. The hearing will be held at Buchanan High School Library, 401 W. Chicago St, Buchanan, MI. Please use entrances 1, 2, or 3.

The Board may not adopt its proposed 2026-2027 budget until after the public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, will be available for public inspection during normal business hours after June 25, 2026, at the Superintendent's Office, 401 W. Chicago St., Buchanan, MI 49107.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Kelly Laesch, Board Secretary

On June 12, 2026, the Cassopolis Area Utility Authority had an estimated amount of around 8,000 gallons of sewer spill on to the ground. During scheduled maintenance of an air release valve on the transmission main from Vandalia to Diamond Lake, a control valve broke and sewer spilled out on to the ground until a pump truck could arrive and pump the sewer down and access to the manhole could be regained. Land that was impacted had hydrated lime spread on the area, and the nearby stream will be monitored to meet state testing procedures.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Jefferson Township Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Synopsis, May 21, 2026
Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Present: Brunner, Bundle, Gillam, Hass, Mendenhall.
REGULAR MEETING BOARD ACTION
• April 9, 2026, meeting minutes approved.
•Treasurer's Report given.
•Payment of bills authorized.
Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Locke, Clerk

PEOPLE DO READ SMALL ADS!

0900 LEGALS

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday June 27, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.
Unit # Name
21 Cecelia Dunifin
27 Nicolas Sansom
28 Emalee Anderson
60 Roenea Anderson
62 Andrew Dunifin
67 Jerome Jankowiak
77 Brittany Mitchell
82 Ericka Pitone
85 Shelden Walden
92 Robert Procopi
99 Joseph Tocco
125/179 Steve Kelley
127/633 Chris Norris
145/468 Michael Merritt
148 Gloster Johnson
183 Cindy Fisher
184/66 Mary Anderson
185 Candy Whitmire
190/306 Linda Nilson
191 Alan Smith
192 Patricia Yoder
240 Teyshawn Wallace
258 Brianna Coon
259 Rose Mitchell
268 Dan Hoft
270 Vincent Bosch
273 Tony Pompey
278 Chelsie Carlyle
284 Kathleen Peterson
322 Frank Starr
331 Valerie Outlaw
334 Sheila Kollars
342 Terrence Moss
346 DaMonica Williams
347 Tyreak Hunter
356 Chase Molica
379 Bobbie Helms
389 Parnell Jenkins
396 Latasha Perog
398 Andre Love
410/534 Rebecca Coleman
416 Kathie Adams
418 Melissa Hocker
427 McCade Reese
429 Aaron Haynes
442 Dawn Hojara
451 Jean Fitch
452 Tyler Mahar
492/676 Malawi Association
506 Elizabeth Luttrell
526 Keith Hill
528 Ron Haynes
541 Nicole Hurt
545 Candy Whitmire
608 Robert Conner
639 Barry Brann
665 Rodney Prescott
677/567 Julie Potate

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday June 27, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.
5 Paul Welling
25 John Harrington
28 Lawson Fink
47/49 Jasmine Collett
52 Alana Abrams
54 Cynthia Swisher

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120, Auction Saturday June 27, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.
127A Tim Chavis
200A Mike Nidiffer
107 Bobby Marrow
140 Ronnie West
168 Jerol Williams Jr.
208 Ryan Smith
227 Jennifer Nichols
263 Tamara Holmes
292 The Woodshed Crafts
308 Ray Vincent
373 Rhonda Sue Outlaw
377 Christy Stevens
399 Lisa Hayslip
481 Natosha Libertowski
521 Paul Mowrey

NOTICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION FOR TEH PRIMARY ELECTION TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF HOWARD TOWNSHIP:

You are hereby notified to register to vote or to change your address for the **August 4, 2026, Primary Election.**

To register, visit any Secretary of State Office, the Cass County Clerk's Office or Howard Township Clerk's Office. Electors who wish to register with their Township Clerks are advised to call ahead for office hours. Howard Township's Office Hours are Tuesday – Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

Proposals on the ballot include:
911 Central Dispatch Renewal Millage Proposal
Renewal not to exceed .1962 mill ($0.1962 per each $1,000 pf taxable value) on all taxable property in the County of Cass for the purpose of funding the costs for the operation of the 911 Central Dispatch.

Shall the Charter Township of Howard disincorporate as a charter township and return to its previous status as a general law township governed under the provisions of Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846, as amended, being sections 41.1 to 41.103 of the Compiled Laws of 1948?

Candidates on the ballot include:
Governor
United States Senator
Representative in Congress - 5th District
State Senator - 17th District
Representative in State Legislature - 36th or 37th District
Precinct Delegate

You may register to vote with the Township at the following location:

Howard Township Office
1345 Barron Lake Road
Niles, MI 49120

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Kyon Woodward, unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): PennyMac Loan Services, LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 5, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 17, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $64,643.93
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 7, Hoyt and Gardner's Addition to the City of Dowagiac, according to the recorded plat thereof as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 13, Cass County Records.
Common street address (if any): 210 S Lowe St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-1639
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1595361 (06-13)(07-04)

1000 HOME SERVICE DIRECTORY

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269-591-0100

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Sturgis, MI 49091
SAM SCHWARTZ
269-221-0159

Classifieds Make A Cash Connection!

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION FOR THE ELECTION TO BE HELD August 4, 2026 DOWAGIAC, MICHIGAN

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF DOWAGIAC:

You are hereby notified to register to vote or to change your address for the August 4, 2026, Election.

To register, visit any Secretary of State Office, the Cass County Clerk's Office or your City Clerk's Office at City Hall. Electors who wish to register with the City Clerk may do so: Wednesdays 1:00 to 3:00 pm and Thursdays 1:00 to 3:00 pm

The Ballot features:
· State Governor
· Congressional: United States Senator
· Representative in Congress – 5th District
· Legislative: State Senator – 17th District
· Representative in State Legislature- 37th District
· Delegate: Delegate to County Convention

Proposals:
County – 911 Central Dispatch Renewal Milage Proposal
Shall the County of Cass, Michigan, be authorized to levy annually an amount not to exceed .196 mil ($0.1962 per each $1,000 of taxable value), which is a renewal of the milage rate that expired in 2025, against all taxable property within Cass County for a period of four (4) years, 2026 through 2029, inclusive, for the purpose of funding the costs for the operation of the 911 Central Dispatch? The estimate of the revenue Cass County will collect if the milage is approved and levied in the first year (2026) is approximately $650,000. By law, a portion of he milage may be subject to capture by brownfield redevelopment authorities and those authorities governed by the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act, 2018 PA 57, including but not limited to the City of Dowagiac and City of Niles Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities.

You may register to vote at the following location:
Dowagiac City Hall, 241 South Front Street; Dowagiac, MI 49047
By: Patty Patano, City Clerk, (269) 783-2502

NOTICE OF ELECTION
Howard Township, Cass County

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF HOWARD TOWNSHIP:
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, August 4, 2026.
THE POLLS OF SAID ELECTION WILL OPEN AT 7 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING AND CLOSE AT 8 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING ON AUGUST 4, 2026.
Proposals on the ballot include:
911 Central Dispatch Renewal Millage Proposal
Renewal not to exceed .1962 mill ($0.1962 per each $1,000 pf taxable value) on all taxable property in the County of Cass for the purpose of funding the costs for the operation of the 911 Central Dispatch.
Shall the Charter Township of Howard disincorporate as a charter township and return to its previous status as a general law township governed under the provisions of Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846, as amended, being sections 41.1 to 41.103 of the Compiled Laws of 1948?
Candidates on the ballot include:
Governor
United States Senator
Representative in Congress - 5th District
State Senator - 17th District
Representative in State Legislature - 36th or 37th District
Precinct Delegate

A full text of the ballot proposals may be obtained at the Cass County Clerk/Register's Office, 120 N. Broadway, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031; telephone: 269-445-4464.
Polling location is handicap accessible, and persons with special needs, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, shall be supplied with Braille or audio instructions upon request.
Absentee ballots can be obtained by contacting Sheri Wozniak, Howard Township Clerk, by calling 269-684-0072.
ELECTORS WILL BE VOTING IN THEIR TOWNSHIP AT THEIR ASSIGNED PRECINCT
Precinct #1 - Howard Township Business Office – 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, Michigan
Precinct #2 – Howard Fire Station Bays (Lake Shore Entrance) – 2690 Lake Shore Drive, Niles, Michigan
Sheri Wozniak, Howard Township Clerk

HOWARD CHARTER TOWNSHIP CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

TO: RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF HOWARD CHARTER TOWNSHIP AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing before the Planning Commission of Howard Charter Township, Cass County, Michigan will be held during a special meeting of the Planning Commission on July 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, Michigan for the consideration of zoning ordinance text amendments to Zoning Ordinance #192, Chapter 3 Section 3.02 Definitions; Chapter 15 Section 15.04 Easements and Section 15.25 Accessory Use, Building or Structure; Chapter 22; to summarize, accomplish the following:

1. Amendment to Section 3.02 Definitions; to add the definition of "Debris".
2. Amendment to Section 15.04 Easements: to clarify wording
3. Amendment to Section 15.25 Accessory Use, Building or Structure: to clarify where building/structures are allowed.
4. Chapter 22: to add a temporary moratorium on Data Centers and Battery Energy Storage Systems

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT you are invited to attend the hearing and to present your opinions or position relative to the subject of this hearing. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may send a letter stating your opinions or position to the Howard Charter Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, MI 49120, Attention: Zoning Administrator.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT the application describing the action or relief being sought and Township Zoning Ordinance #192 is available for public inspection, at the Township Office on regular business days during regular business hours.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT the Township will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services at the hearing to individuals with disabilities upon five (5) days' notice to the Howard Charter Township Clerk of the need for the same. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township by email at depclerk@howardtwp.org, in writing, or by calling the Clerk at the Township office at the address and/or phone number provided below.

Published: 6/20/2026
Linda McGregor
Zoning Administrator
1345 Barron Lake Rd
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269) 684-0072, opt 3

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on JULY 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Danny Banks II, to Fifth Third Mortgage - MI, LLC, Mortgagee, dated September 26, 2008 and recorded October 8, 2008 in Liber 984, Page 501 Cass County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Fifth Third Bank, National Association as successor by merger to Fifth Third Mortgage Company, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Seventy-Two Thousand Thirty-Eight and 81/100 Dollars ($72,038.81).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on JULY 15, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Ontwa, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot Number 93, the North Half of Lot 92, and the South half of Lot 94, Redfield Woods No. 2, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber I of Plats, page 434, Cass County Records.
70862 Sherman Rd, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: June 13, 2026
File No. 26-004938
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (06-13)(07-04)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on July 1, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Mark Lewandowski, a Single Man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Rocket Mortgage, LLC, its successors and assigns Date of mortgage: September 30, 2024 Recorded on October 7, 2024, Book # 1251 on Page # 1850. Foreclosing Assignee: Rocket Mortgage, LLC. Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Two Hundred Forty-Seven Thousand Four Hundred Eighteen and 21/100 ($247,418.21) Mortgaged premises: Located in the Township of Milton, Cass County and described as: LOT NUMBERED 6 IN FRANTZ ACRES, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN LIBER 1-H OF PLATS, PAGE 385, CASS COUNTY RECORDS. Commonly known as 33546 Frantz Dr, Niles, MI 49120 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961 pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Please be advised that the trustee will require any entity or trust bidder at this trustee's sale to provide beneficial ownership information, documentation, and written certification as required under FinCEN's Anti-Money Laundering Regulations for Residential Real Estate Transfers, effective for transfers to covered transferees closing on or after March 1, 2026. This requirement applies where the purchaser is a legal entity (including an LLC, corporation, or partnership) or a trust, and the transfer is not financed by an institutional lender subject to existing anti-money laundering requirements. The required information and certification must be provided to the trustee prior to issuance of the trustee's deed upon sale. No trustee's deed will be issued for a covered transfer until all required FinCEN information has been received and certified. Additional information regarding these regulations and required transferee disclosures can be found at: https://www.fincen.gov/rre and https://www.fincen.gov/rre-faqs. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. ALAW 5404 Cypress Center Drive, Suite 300, Tampa, FL 33609 (813) 221-4743 26-002868 (05-30)(06-20)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 49c of the State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966, 1966 PA 346, MCL 125.1449c, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 08, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Bethany Emborsky, unmarried woman Original Mortgagee: Guaranteed Rate, Inc. Date of mortgage: March 17, 2025 Recorded on March 25, 2025, Liber 1258, on Page 330, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Michigan State Housing Development Authority Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety-Three and 70/100 Dollars ($129,793.70) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Cass County, and described as: Lots 89 and 90, Andrew Lester Addition to the City of Dowagiac, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, page 53, Cass County Records. Commonly known as 116 Sherwood St, Dowagiac, MI 49047 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 125.1449v, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 125.1449v(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Michigan State Housing Development Authority Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1595323 (06-06)(06-27)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Otis D Kirby and Krystle R Willming, joint tenants with full rights of survivorship
Original Mortgagee: Honor Credit Union
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: August 3, 2018
Date of Mortgage Recording: August 6, 2018
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $98,940.19
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pokagon, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Commencing at a point which is 24.64 rods South of a point which is 56.20 rods South 45 3/4 West from the most Westerly corner of Tuthill's Addition to the City of Dowagiac, as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 46, Cass County Records; thence South 64 degrees West 7.96 rods; thence South to the East and West Quarter line of Section 2, Town 6 South, Range 16 West, thence East along said Quarter line 7.055 rods; thence North to the place of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 29170 Pokagon St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-7703
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1595721 (06-13)(07-04)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 5, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Frank J. Coussens, III, a single man
Original Mortgagee: JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: August 24, 2018
Date of Mortgage Recording: September 10, 2018
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $86,087.70
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Ontwa, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lots 46, 47 and 48, Eagle Park, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 98, Cass County Records.
Common street address (if any): 68776 West St, Edwardsburg, MI 49112-9585
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
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American bittern decline in Southwest Michigan

Photo provided / Don Estep

American bittern on May 3 in a New Buffalo Township marsh.

Photo provided / Brad Anderson

Eastern garter snake, June 4 at Baroda Township Park.

Don Estep of LaPorte, Ind. photographed an American bittern back on May 3 in a marsh near New Buffalo. The American bittern is a medium-sized heron that remains inconspicuous among the cattail marshes due to its brown and white plumage.

Jonathan Wuepper
Southwest Michigan Wildlife

During the breeding season, the American bittern nests in cattail or sedge marshes bordering ponds and lakes. They also nest in bogs, wet prairies, meadows and, occasionally, hayfields.

During the nesting season in eastern North America, American bitterns can be found from the southern shore of James Bay and central Quebec, south to the Ohio River. However, due to habitat loss, the species is absent in most of Ohio, Indiana, southern Wisconsin and the southern lower peninsula of Michigan.

At the time of European settlement in Berrien County, circa 1830, the American bittern was much more common than it is today. The first local record of the species occurred in about 1880, when it was listed among the species shot by local hunters in the marshes surrounding Benton Harbor.

According to ornithological literature, in the years following WWII, American bitterns became sparse or absent over much of the farming regions of the Great Lakes States. I am unaware of any confirmed breeding observations in Berrien County in the last several decades, although I would not be surprised if they were confirmed to be nesting in Grand Mere State Park, Sarett Nature Center or the Galien River County Park.

Most recent American bittern records from Berrien County likely represent migrant birds. On average, the first American bittern each spring is reported during mid-April. Migration reaches its peak in early to mid-May. In the fall, most American bitterns depart our area by October and spend the winter months in the southern Atlantic and Gulf states, south into Mexico and Central America.

One bird species that has made a remarkable comeback since the mid-20th Century is the bald eagle. One of these majestic birds was photographed by Don Estep at daybreak on May 27 at New Buffalo Harbor. It is believed that this bald eagle is tending to eaglets in a nearby nest!

Bald eagles can be seen in Southwest Michigan during any month or the year, but are most common during the spring and autumn migration. There are likely a half dozen nesting pairs of bald eagles in Berrien County. In recent years, I have been aware of nesting bald eagles in remote areas of the Paw Paw and St. Joseph Rivers.

Brad Anderson submitted a photo of an eastern garter snake, found on June 4 at Baroda Township Park. The eastern garter snake is the most common snake in Southwest Michigan. It is a non-venomous snake found in a variety of habitats, including urban and suburban landscapes.

Jonathan Wuepper is an area naturalist. Report your sightings to him at wuepperj@gmail.com

Bald eagle with fish in talons, May 27 at New Buffalo Harbor.

Photo / Don Estep

College football leaders need time to sort out revenue details on expansion

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DENVER — College football leaders gathered Wednesday to debate the merits of expanding to 24 or 16 playoff teams. They need more time, though, to sort out the details of what could be the most important number – money.

Rich Clark, the executive director of the College Football Playoff, said the meetings between commissioners and a few others were "very healthy" but didn't lead to anything concrete.

"We've got a lot on the table to just help us to continue to move the ball forward," Clark said. "We have a little homework to do coming out of there. ... We have a good idea what we need to bring back to them to help them with their decisions."

They will keep studying the impact that expanding the playoff from 12 to 16 or 24 teams could have on venues, the schedule, the future of now-imperiled conference title games. And, of course, how much extra games might go for on the open market.

Southeastern Conference commissioner Greg Sankey has lobbied for 16 teams, while Big 12 and Atlantic Coast Conference leaders have widely agreed on their preference for a 24-team scenario that the Big Ten first put forward and still supports.

The playoff expanded from four to 12 teams in 2024, but after executives failed to reach an expansion agreement, the CFP will use the same model for the 2026-27 season.

"I feel like we made progress and sometimes, even though you don't get to the answers, you understand more about what you need to get to the answer," Clark said. "My goal is for us to make the most informed decision that we can. If it takes time, I would rather be deliberate about this than rush into something that was half-baked or not fully thought through."

September meeting

The next meeting for the leaders of college football is slated for September, but another could be scheduled if they're "able to gather the facts and the information that they need," Clark said.

Like how scheduling might work and, of course, maybe more insight into revenue.

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Kansas' Peterson among top guards in NBA draft

By AARON BEARD
AP Basketball Writer

Eric Gay / AP

Illinois' Keaton Wagler celebrates after Illinois beat Iowa in an Elite Eight game in the NCAA tournament on March 28.

Darryn Peterson looked every bit like a possible No. 1 overall NBA draft pick as a Kansas freshman — when he was on the court.

The 6-foot-5, 199-pound combo guard averaged 20.2 points but missed 11 games with a variety of injuries and illnesses.

He headlines a position featuring freshman top-10 prospects in Arkansas' Darius Acuff Jr., Illinois' Keaton Wagler, Louisville's Mikel Brown Jr. and Houston's Kingston Flemings.

Here's a look at the some of the top guards entering Tuesday's first round:

Darryn Peterson, Kansas

STRENGTHS: The scoring playmaker can attack off the dribble, in the halfcourt and in transition.

He shot 38.2 percent on 3-pointers, hitting six 3s in a win at Oklahoma State. He shot 82.6 percent at the foul line and got there often, logging six games with at least eight attempts – including one with 16 (against TCU in the Big 12 Tournament) and another with 15 (while scoring a season-high 32 points in an overtime comeback win in his first meeting with TCU).

He also averaged 4.2 rebounds and 1.6 assists.

CONCERNS: The frequent uncertainty about his day-to-day status is a variable NBA teams will evaluate.

He had a full-body cramping issue requiring hospitalization before the season. Beyond missing time, he sometimes had limited minutes – even abruptly checking out of games – to create headaches despite the high-end talent.

There was at least a positive finish: he logged 37 minutes (against Cal Baptist) and 36 minutes (against St. John's) in two NCAA Tournament games.

Darius Acuff Jr., Arkansas

STRENGTHS: Offense stands out for the 6-2, 186-pound freshman and first-team Associated Press All-American.

He led the Razorbacks to their first Southeastern Conference Tournament title in 26 years and the Sweet 16.

Acuff ranked third nationally in scoring (23.5) and 14th in assists (6.4). He thrived as the ballhandler in pick-and-roll plays (rated "Excellent" in the 89th percentile by Synergy) and in isolation (rated "Very good" in the 74th percentile). He was electric in scoring a program freshman-record 49 points in a double-overtime loss at Alabama, along with posting 91 points and 12 3-pointers in three SEC Tournament wins.

CONCERNS: Defense is a significant question, including handling matchups against bigger guards.

Keaton Wagler, Illinois

STRENGTHS: The 6-5, 188-pound freshman went from a four-star recruit to second-team AP All-American in the Illini's first Final Four trip in 21 years. He showed an all-around skillset with the size to play on or off the ball.

He averaged 17.9 points, 5.1 rebounds and 4.2 assists. He shot 39.7 percent on 3s, including hitting nine 3s in a 46-point outburst against Purdue. He earned "Excellent" ratings from Synergy as the pick-and-roll ballhandler and with his jumper in off-the-dribble, catch-and-shoot and contested opportunities.

CONCERNS: He has a slim build that could cause him to struggle against stronger opponents and he lacks elite athleticism.

Mikel Brown Jr., Louisville

STRENGTHS: The Louisville freshman offers big scoring potential with good size (6-5, 180) after averaging 18.2 points and 4.7 assists. The highlight was his 45 points and 10 3-pointers in a blowout of N.C. State, breaking the Atlantic Coast Conference freshman scoring record set by 2025 No. 1 overall pick Cooper Flagg.

CONCERNS: He'll need time to add strength and grow into his frame. He also battled back issues that sidelined him for eight games at midseason and then resurfaced to sideline him for the last six, including two March Madness games.

Kingston Flemings, Houston

STRENGTHS: The 6-3, 183-pound freshman was a third-team AP All-American as a lead guard with potential to be disruptive defensively.

He averaged 16.1 points, 4.1 rebounds and 5.2 assists while shooting 47.6 percent overall, 38.7 percent on 3s and 84.5 percent on free throws. He showed the ability to pressure teams in transition or off the bounce. He had a Cougars freshman-record 42 points in a loss to Texas Tech and finished with a nearly 3:1 assist-to-turnover ratio.

Flemings ranked in the top six among tested combine players in lane-agility time, shuttle run and three-quarter-court sprint.

CONCERNS: He'll need to add strength to handle physical play, while shot mechanics have been discussed as an area needing refinement.

Others of note:

■ BRAYDEN BURRIES: The 6-4, 215-pound freshman from Arizona is a combo guard with a sturdy frame and two-way potential. He's a top-10 prospect who shot 39.1 percent from 3-point range and was fourth at the combine in standing vertical leap (35 inches).

■ LABARON PHILON JR.: The 6-3, 176-pound sophomore from Alabama was a third-team AP All-American after averaging 22.0 points and 5.0 assists. The potential late-lottery prospect boosted his shooting efficiency (50.1 percent overall, 39.9 percent on 3s) while thriving as the ballhandler in pick-and-rolls (94th percentile in Synergy).

■ CAMERON CARR: The 6-5, 184-pound sophomore transferred from Tennessee to Baylor, averaging 18.9 points, 5.8 rebounds and 2.6 assists. The first-round prospect ranked among combine leaders in standing vertical leap (second, 38 inches) and max vertical leap (third, 42.5).

■ BENNETT STIRTZ: The 6-3, 186-pound point guard went from Division II to Drake to Iowa, leading the Hawkeyes to their first Elite Eight since 1987. The first-round prospect averaged 19.8 points, 4.4 assists and 1.4 steals. Synergy rated him as "Excellent" as the ballhandler in pick-and-rolls (91st percentile) and finishing at the rim (90th).

■ DAILYN SWAIN: The 6-7, 211-pound wing transferred from Xavier to Texas, where he averaged 17.3 points, 7.5 rebounds and 3.6 assists. The first-round prospect showed active hands by averaging 1.6 steals but shot just 29.3 percent on 3s through three seasons.

■ CHRISTIAN ANDERSON: The 6-1, 180-pound sophomore from Texas Tech was a third-team AP All-American who averaged 18.5 points while ranking fifth nationally in assists (7.4).

He's a bit small but projects as a scoring playmaker who shot 40 percent on 3s over two seasons.

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